EXHIBIT 8
DATE 2/2/2011
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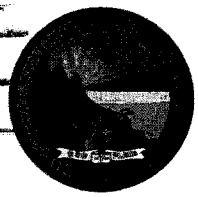

Preparing Montana Students for College and Career Readiness

Proposal for the Montana Office of Public Instruction

The ACT®

State Programs
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P.O. Box 168
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DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENTS AND SERVICES

This draft project outline presents program and pricing information to the *Montana Office of Public Instruction* for the delivery of *ACT® Plus Writing through ACT's State Testing Program.* Test administration and related services will be offered to eligible districts and schools affiliated with the *Montana Office of Public Instruction.*

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The ACT Plus Writing

The ACT is a curriculum-based achievement test that measures the skills and knowledge important for students to be successful both during and after high school. Through use of ACT's College Readiness Standards, student and school cohort scores can be transferred into detailed, research-based descriptions of the skills and knowledge associated with what students are likely to know and to be able to do – and what they are ready to do next. Content covered by the *ACT Plus Writing* includes English, math, reading, science and writing, with content based on ACT's National Curriculum Survey®, a one-of-a-kind survey instrument that collects data from faculty across the country on what entering college students should know and be able to do to be ready for college-level coursework.

The *ACT Plus Writing* is the only college admissions test that has College Readiness Benchmarks that are based on empirical research linking back to the 10th grade with PLAN and to the 8th grade with EXPLORE. These benchmark scores are early indicators of likely college success based on scores at these key transitional periods.

The ACT also provides test takers with a 72 item interest inventory that provides valuable information for career and educational planning and a student profile section that provides a comprehensive profile of a student's work in high school and his or her future plans. The ACT is universally accepted for college admission.

ACT Writing Test

A 30-minute writing test is an optional part of the ACT. This measure of writing yields information that complements what is already provided by the multiple-choice English test, which measures students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English and of such rhetorical skills such as logic, organization, and style. The writing test is developed by staff following a methodology that entails an inclusive, broad-based survey of the nation's high schools and colleges to determine the writing skills being taught in high school and those expected of first-year college students. The test has been extensively field-tested and is administered in a standardized testing environment and scored with high accuracy.

Access and Opportunity for All Students

There are several tangible and intangible benefits of using the *ACT Plus Writing* in your state's strategic initiatives to increase your students' college and career readiness. Some of those include:

- Increased opportunities for minority, middle and low income, and male students
- Promotes educational and career planning
- Less remediation—Students who are ready for college are less likely to need remediation
- Correlates with increases in college enrollment, persistence, and success
- Weekday administration
- Allows for use of State IDs
- Aligns with state standards

ACT's College and Career Readiness System

ACT's College and Career Readiness System provides a longitudinal, systematic approach to educational and career planning, assessment, instructional support, and evaluation. The system focuses on the integrated, higher-order thinking skills students develop in grades K-12 that are important for success both during and after high school.

ACT's College and Career Readiness System focuses on a number of key transition points that young people face:

- **EXPLORE®:** The EXPLORE program is designed to help 8th and 9th graders explore a broad range of options for their future. EXPLORE prepares students not only for their high school coursework, but for their post–high school choices as well. It marks an important beginning for a student's future academic and career success.
- **PLAN®:** The PLAN program helps 10th graders build a solid foundation for future academic and career success and provides information needed to address each school districts' high-priority issues. It is a comprehensive guidance resource that helps students measure their current academic development, explore career/training options, and make plans for the remaining years of high school and post-graduation years.
- **The ACT®:** The ACT test assesses high school students' general educational development, their readiness to begin college-level work, and is highly regarded and accepted as an admissions assessment at virtually all universities and colleges in the United States.

The programs within the College and Career Readiness System can be mixed and matched in ways that meet the needs of individual schools, districts, or states. However, each program includes the four components that form the foundation of the College and Career Readiness System:

- Student Planning—Process through which students can identify career and educational goals early and then pursue those goals.
- Instructional Support—Support materials and services to help classroom teachers prepare their students for the coming transitions. This component reinforces the direct link between the content and skills measured in the College and Career Readiness System programs and those that are taught in high school classrooms.
- Assessment—Student achievement is assessed at three key transition points in the College Readiness System—8th/9th, 10th, and 11th/12th grades—so that academic progress can be monitored to ensure that each student is prepared to reach his/her post-high school goals.
- Evaluation—An academic information monitoring service that provides teachers and administrators with a comprehensive analysis of academic growth between the College and Career Readiness System levels.

These four key components of ACT's College and Career Readiness System work together to respond to the needs of students, teachers, school administrators, and state educational agencies; in concrete and effective ways. EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT are used in a systemic approach in the following ways:

Students:

- Identify career and educational options
- Establish goals
- Determine courses needed to fulfill career and educational plans
- Evaluate educational/career progress
- Gain exposure to the ACT content and format

Teachers and Counselors:

- Effectively guide students
- Advise the best course of study based on student plans
- Deliver effective instruction
- Evaluate student progress
- Evaluate instruction
- Identify students eligible for advanced coursework, including AP

School and District Administrators as well as State Educational Agencies:

- Document success in meeting academic standards (Measures students' progress toward college readiness and state standards)
- Monitor progress toward desired educational outcomes
- Connects assessment results to instruction, curriculum evaluation, effective guidance, and student success
- Provide career and educational planning, instructional support, assessment, and longitudinal evaluation
- Receive academic performance data that is diagnostic and intervention-specific
- Verify student progress from grades 8 through 12
- Evaluate the need for curriculum adjustments

IMPLEMENTATION AND ADMINISTRATION

The ACT Plus Writing

1. Eligible participating schools will administer the *ACT Plus Writing* through ACT's State Testing Program, and will receive all standard State Testing test materials, scoring, and reporting services. Each school must be able to comply with all 'Requirements for Standardized Testing' as published by ACT State Testing.
2. Eligible participating schools and districts will receive standard ACT State Testing reporting as listed below.
3. The Montana Office of Public Instruction will receive standard ACT State Testing Reporting services as listed below

ACT Reports – provided *after* scoring/resolution completion

STUDENT LEVEL REPORTS:			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**ACT**
ACT Student Report	Printed paper report containing College Reportable Scores	Mailed to the students at the addresses listed on the answer folder. Mailing includes *Using Your ACT Results* booklet	Mailed 3-8 weeks following receipt of answer folders and completion of irregularity and scoring resolution Reports returned to ACT undeliverable will be mailed as a batch to the high school Test Location is reported as "State"
ACT High School Report (Student Level Score Data)	Printed paper report containing College Reportable Scores	One (1) paper copy mailed to the Director of Counseling in batches until all reports are delivered	Reports shipped 3-8 weeks following receipt of answer folders and completion of irregularity and scoring resolution. Arrive in batches until complete May be received along with reports from National or other testing

STUDENT LEVEL REPORTS:			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**ACT**
ACT High School Report Checklist	List of students for whom paper reports and score labels are included in the shipment of College Reportable Score Reports	One (1) paper copy mailed to Director of Counseling, reflecting the order in which a group of reports is shipped, alphabetically within grade in school. Checklists are not cumulative	Shipped with ACT High School Reports (see above)
ACT Student Score Labels	Printed label for College Reportable scores	Two (2) printed labels per student sent to the Director of Counseling; used to place College Reportable test results on a student's high school transcript/permanent record	Shipped with ACT High School Reports (see above)
ACT Student College Report(s)	College Reportable Scores are reported to students' selected colleges	Colleges determine frequency and format of receiving scores (e.g., paper, CD, internet)	Students may list valid ACT college codes for up to 4 colleges on the State Testing answer folder Additional college reports may be requested at a fee after initial reporting
ACT Student Online Scores	Web page containing College Reportable Scores	Student logs on to www.actstudent.org to access a variety of services through their ACT student web accounts	State scores will be available online about one week after the student receives the printed score report in the mail If the student already has an ACT student web account, the student can check to see if the state scores have been added If the student needs to create a new account, the student must enter the ACT ID from the printed score report to view the state scores

School Level ACT Reports			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**OTHER**
ACT Profile Report – High School with cover letter	Aggregate report provides trends and averages of the High School based on weekday state testing.	One (1) printed copy mailed to High School Principals for each High School with one or more ACT tested students	Report to include the State Testing Weekday Cohort

District Level ACT Reports			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**OTHER**
ACT Profile Report – District with cover letter	Aggregate report provides trends and averages of the District based on weekday state tested student population	One (1) printed copy mailed to District Assessment Coordinator for each District with one or more ACT tested students	Report to include the State Testing Weekday Cohort

District Level ACT Reports			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**OTHER**
ACT District Student Level Data File	District Student Data File includes results for all students testing on the state test date	One (1) copy, sent to the District Assessment Coordinator	Data file to include the State Testing Weekday Cohort

State Level ACT Reports –			
REPORT	**DESCRIPTION**	**DISTRIBUTION**	**OTHER**
ACT State Student Data File	Data file containing all cognitive and non-cognitive student information based on state tested student population	Delivered in MS Excel to the state over a secure file transfer site	Data File to include all students tested under the State Testing Weekday Cohort
ACT Profile Report – State	Aggregate report provides trends and averages of the State based on the state tested student population	One report delivered	Report to include the State Testing Weekday Cohort

Training
Per State Testing requirements, all school-appointed testing staff (Test Supervisor, Back-up Test Supervisor and Test Accommodations Coordinator) will be required to attend the ACT Test Administration Training Workshop. In addition, Test Accommodations Coordinators will receive an accommodation DVD that they will be required to review.

DESCRIPTION OF ESTIMATED FEES

Below are the estimated costs for a statewide implementation of the *ACT Plus Writing* assessment in the 2010-2011 school year. These costs are based on ACT's projected fees and *Montana Office of Public Instruction* projected student enrollment for the 2010 -2011 school year. These estimates are for working discussions of the *Montana Office of Public Instruction* only.

Program	**Grade**	**# Students**	**Unit Cost**	**Estimated Cost**
ACT plus Writing	*11th*	*12,000*	*$49.00*	*$588,000*
Total Estimated Implementation Costs*				***$588,000***

** The estimated costs, projected fees and pricing quotes set forth in this document are intended for discussion purposes only and represent assessment fees only. Fees for ancillary and other services (e.g., contract management, special reporting, other state requirements, etc.) would be negotiated between ACT and the state.*

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COLLEGE READINESS

The Benefits of Statewide Use of the ACT® Test

Recently, there has been increasing interest among state governments in establishing statewide testing of high school students. This interest has been driven by various goals, such as reforming high schools, improving the alignment between P–12 requirements and postsecondary expectations, and fulfilling the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act. In addition, attention and interest has focused on the importance of preparing all students for college and work, and on the rigor of state standards and of current high school graduation and/or school accountability tests.

These converging issues combine to make the concept of the incorporation of a statewide college readiness test into a state program a timely idea and one that can play an important role within an effective plan to address many of the important issues that state educators and policymakers are facing.

As part of their move toward statewide assessment at the high school level, a number of states have adopted the ACT® test. The ACT, for students in grades 11 and 12, measures students' academic readiness to make successful transitions to college and work after high school. The ACT is the most widely accepted and used test by postsecondary institutions across the U.S. for college admission and course placement.

For the past five years, Colorado and Illinois have paved the way in adopting the ACT as part of their statewide assessment programs. Colorado uses the ACT in the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) as an eleventh-grade achievement-based assessment that gives the state an indication of how well its public schools are performing at educating students at the K–12 level. Illinois also administers the ACT to all of its public high school juniors as part of its Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). Illinois uses the ACT to measure student progress at meeting state learning standards.

Recently, the state of Michigan adopted the ACT as its statewide high school assessment program. The ACT will replace the Michigan Educational Assessment Program (MEAP) for all Michigan high school students beginning in the 2007–2008 school year. More than a dozen other states are currently considering adopting the ACT as part of their statewide assessments at the eleventh- or twelfth-grade level. Here are just some of the reasons why.

The ACT directly responds to a number of state and national issues.

- *The ACT is an achievement-based test that assesses student mastery of both state learning standards and college readiness standards.* Not only have the knowledge and skills tested on the ACT been shown to correlate strongly with state learning standards, they also reflect those additional skills that have been deemed crucial for first-year college success by postsecondary educators responding to the periodic ACT National Curriculum Survey®. Because of its merging of state K–12

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The ACT is proven to work.

- *The ACT is related to real-world success.* ACT scores are calibrated in relation to the course grades students have earned at hundreds of postsecondary institutions nationwide. These calibrations were used to create ACT's College Readiness Benchmark scores, empirically based standards indicating a student's likely degree of success in college or, increasingly, the workplace, where the same college-level skills are now expected of students who go directly to work after high school.
- *The ACT is a student motivator.* Because students can use their statewide ACT results to apply to college, they are motivated to perform well on test day. States report that the days on which the ACT is administered have the highest attendance rates of the school year—an indication of the value students place on the ACT. Because of this value, the ACT is well received by parents, schools, and other stakeholders.
- *ACT results are portable.* ACT scores are accepted and endorsed by virtually every postsecondary institution in the United States.
- *ACT has a long history of service and credibility.* Now in its 47th year, the ACT has a reputation for professional and technical excellence that is recognized throughout the educational and measurement communities.

The ACT benefits students, parents, and schools.

- *Use of the ACT results in increased identification of talent and increased interest in planning for college.* Many students who might not otherwise have considered college as an option after high school have applied to, been accepted to, and attended college after earning encouraging scores on a statewide administration of the ACT.
- *Use of the ACT increases college attendance, especially for minority and low-income students.* Many of the students who considered college only after earning encouraging scores on the ACT are members of traditionally underrepresented groups or come from families whose income does not exceed $30,000 per year.
- *When used with EXPLORE or PLAN, the ACT results in increased college readiness.* As discussed above, schools that use ACT's eighth- and tenth-grade exploratory and planning assessments are able to intervene early with students who are showing signs of being unready for college. Also, participation in EXPLORE or PLAN is likely to improve student performance on the ACT.
- *The ACT can be used for college course placement.* Students who take the ACT in high school have been able to submit their scores for course placement.

For additional details about the benefits of statewide administration of the ACT as well as profiles about ACT use in specific states and school districts, please see ACT's *EPAS Case Study* series. The series may be accessed online at *http://www.act.org/epas/case/index.html.* Further information about how the ACT increases college readiness can be found at *http://www.act.org/path/policy/education/collegereadiness.html.*

standards and postsecondary requirements, the ACT supplies a crucial "missing link" between the two school systems.

- *The ACT addresses high college remediation rates and costs.* As a measure of college readiness, the ACT can be used to intervene with students who are falling short of college readiness standards. Improving students' readiness for college means that fewer students will need to take remedial coursework in college, thereby lowering the costs of remediation incurred by schools and states. ACT research suggests that, depending on the size of its college-bound population, states may potentially save millions of dollars.
- *The ACT can meet and has met federal standards.* States are using the ACT in fulfillment of federal Title I and No Child Left Behind requirements.
- *The ACT connects easily to early readiness, preparation, and intervention efforts.* When used in combination with ACT's eighth- and tenth-grade assessments, EXPLORE® and PLAN®, the ACT is the culmination of an integrated, three-stage educational exploration and planning process. EXPLORE, PLAN, and the ACT are based on the same score scale and thereby provide an articulated, systematic approach for intervention, progress monitoring, and evaluation. Students who take EXPLORE and PLAN not only benefit directly from the ability of these tests to provide guidance on their choice of high school coursework, but are also more likely to perform well on the ACT.
- *ACT provides program evaluation information.* Since its inception, the ACT has been designed to provide information to high schools about the effectiveness of their curricula and their instructional programs. These data are provided annually (based on current student performance) as well as longitudinally (based on the performance of their high school graduates in college). These college-to-high-school feedback reports help high schools evaluate how well they are preparing their graduates for college-level work.
- *ACT test users receive additional assistance from ACT.* ACT offers workshops and other forms of consultation to user states. Instructional support resources are available from ACT for the ACT test and its companion programs, helping to tie results directly to classroom practice, curricula, and state standards. States that have taken advantage of these opportunities report benefiting from ACT's wealth of professional expertise.
- *The ACT is affordable.* Statewide administration of the ACT is not cost prohibitive, and may in fact be more cost efficient and effective than established state tests.
- *The ACT is an equal-opportunity assessment.* The ACT emphasizes academic preparation and options for *all* students, whether they plan to go on to college after high school or enter directly into a workforce training program. In addition, the ACT is administered under conditions that meet the highest standards of professional measurement practice, thereby offering all students a fair and equal opportunity to demonstrate what they know and can do.

Is the ACT right for your state?

To answer this question, first identify the primary purposes and intended outcomes of your statewide assessment program. If your state is interested in increased college readiness (which also increases students' likelihood of graduating from college), earlier interventions to increase student achievement, increased college enrollment, and lower remediation costs, then consider statewide administration of the ACT. Statewide ACT administration also represents a strong solution for states interested in raising the rigor of their standards and assessments and for seamlessly connecting secondary and postsecondary education.

Next, weigh logistical questions: What is your timeline? What administration model is best for your state: mandatory or voluntary? How will students' scores be used? Are there legislative requirements that may affect how statewide testing is implemented in your state? How should use of the ACT interact with state testing programs already in existence in your state?

Consider other questions in evaluating whether statewide administration of the ACT is a practical solution for your state:

1. What is the match between your state's learning standards and the standards assessed by the ACT? (As of this writing, ACT has conducted matches between its College Readiness Standards and the standards in 37 states. To receive a copy of the match report for your state or to arrange for ACT to conduct a match with your state's standards, please contact your nearest ACT regional office.)
2. Is use of the ACT consistent with the intended outcomes of your statewide assessment program?
3. Is the ACT being used as one of multiple measures on which to base high-stakes decisions about the students in your state or about school or teacher effectiveness?
4. Does your implementation plan include informing students and parents about what the ACT measures, what the scores mean, and how the scores can help students prepare for what they want to do after high school?
5. Does your implementation plan also include informing teachers and administrators about what the ACT measures, how to interpret scores, and how ACT results relate to instruction?
6. Is the ACT administered under secure, standardized conditions that will provide all students with a fair and equitable opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned and ensure the integrity of the test scores to those who interpret and use the results?
7. When ACT scores are combined with other statewide assessment measures, do ACT scores serve both as one of several measures of student achievement related to statewide goals and as an independent indicator of their readiness for college?

For more information about these and other issues, or for consultation, please contact the ACT regional office nearest you. Our professionals are available to help you analyze your needs, develop an administration plan that is right for you, and ensure that statewide administration of the ACT is implemented smoothly and efficiently.

Data-Driven Actions for Student Success ACT

ACT's College and Career Readiness System

Longitudinal Assessments

EXPLORE

8th–9th Grade

- Baseline assessment
- Helps increase PLAN and ACT scores
- Documents if students are on track for college

PLAN

10th Grade

- Midpoint assessment
- Helps increase ACT scores
- Documents if students are on track for college

The ACT

11th–12th Grade

- Measures what students have learned
- Increases college readiness when used with EXPLORE and PLAN
- Documents readiness for college

Score Scale

1–25

1–32

1–36

- Only curriculum-based, research-validated system available today
- Increases readiness for college or a career
- Provides link between scores and skills
- Promotes college enrollment, persistence, and success
- Built on a common score scale to measure academic progress from grades 8 through 12
- Helps students identify postsecondary options

Instruction

QualityCore

9th–12th Grade Instructional Improvement

- End-of-course assessments
- Research-based educator resources
- Aligned formative item pool
- For 12 high school courses
- Based on empirical research
- Helps improve college readiness for all students by ensuring high school courses are focused on essential postsecondary skills

2010–2011 ACT Test Dates

United States, U.S. Territories, Puerto Rico, and Canada

Test Date	Registration (regular fee)	Late Registration***
September 11, 2010*	August 6, 2010	August 7–20, 2010
October 23, 2010	September 17, 2010	September 18–October 1, 2010
December 11, 2010	November 5, 2010	November 6–19, 2010
February 12, 2011**	January 7, 2011	January 8–21, 2011
April 9, 2011	March 4, 2011	March 5–18, 2011
June 11, 2011	May 6, 2011	May 7–20, 2011

*The September test date is offered only within the 50 United States and D.C.
**No test centers are scheduled in New York for the February test date.
***If you miss the regular deadline, you can register during the late period, but must pay the additional nonrefundable late fee.

ACT College Readiness Benchmark Scores

Test	College Course(s)	EXPLORE Grade 8	EXPLORE Grade 9	PLAN	The ACT
English	English Composition	13	14	15	18
Math	Algebra	17	18	19	22
Reading	Social Sciences	15	16	17	21
Science	Biology	20	20	21	24

- A benchmark score is the minimum score needed on an ACT subject area test to indicate a 50% chance of obtaining a B or higher or a 75% chance of obtaining a C or higher in the corresponding credit-bearing courses.
- For more information on the **College Readiness Benchmark Scores** visit www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarks.pdf

Why should your school be an ACT test center?

By taking the test at their high school or in the area, students will:

- Be able to take the ACT in a familiar environment, close to home.
- Be more comfortable taking the ACT.

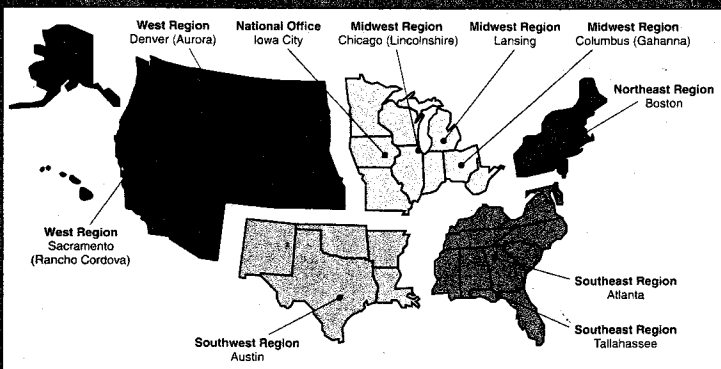
Your school can benefit, too—You can:

- Demonstrate your commitment to college readiness.
- Encourage students to go to college.

Contact us:

TestAct@act.org • 800/553-6244, ext 1510

www.act.org/ccrw/resources



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Northeast Region
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508/229-0111
boston@act.org

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800/553-6244

ACT Website
www.act.org

ACT Student Website
www.actstudent.org

PLAN Customer Service
800/553-6244, ext 1029

PLAN Website
www.act.org/plan

EXPLORE Customer Service
800/553-6244, ext 1892

EXPLORE Website
www.act.org/explore

QualityCore Inquiries
866/764-0228

QualityCore Website
www.qualitycore.org

ACT College Readiness Standards
www.act.org/standard

ACT College Readiness Benchmarks
www.act.org/research/policymakers/pdf/benchmarks.pdf

ACT Research—Policymakers
www.act.org/research/policymakers/index.html

ACT Research—Educators
www.act.org/research/services/index.html

ACT's Longitudinal Assessments
Content Detail

	Score Scales		
	EXPLORE	PLAN	The ACT
	1–25	1–32	1–36
English Test Content and Number of Items			
Punctuation	6	7	10
Grammar and Usage	8	9	12
Sentence Structure	11	14	18
Strategy	5	6	12
Organization	5	7	11
Style	5	7	12
Total	**40** **30 minutes**	**50** **30 minutes**	**75** **45 minutes**
Mathematics Test Content and Number of Items			
Pre-Algebra	10	14	14
Elementary Algebra	9	8	10
Intermediate Algebra	—	—	9
Geometry	7	—	—
Coordinate Geometry	—	7	9
Plane Geometry	—	11	14
Statistics/Probability	4	—	—
Trigonometry	—	—	4
Total	**30** **30 minutes**	**40** **40 minutes**	**60** **60 minutes**
Reading Test Content and Number of Items			
Prose Fiction	10	8	10
Humanities	10	9	10
Social Sciences	10	8	10
Natural Sciences	—	—	10
Total	**30** **30 minutes**	**25** **20 minutes**	**40** **35 minutes**
Science Test Content and Number of Items			
Data Representation	12	10	15
Research Summaries	10	14	18
Conflicting Viewpoints	6	6	7
Total	**28** **30 minutes**	**30** **25 minutes**	**40** **35 minutes**
Optional Writing Test (the ACT only)—30 minutes			

www.act.org/ccrw/resources

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Montana State Legislature

2011 Session

Exhibit 8

This exhibit is a booklet which can not be scanned, therefore only the front cover/table of content and 10 pages have been scanned to aid in your research.

The original exhibits are on file at the Montana Historical Society and may be viewed there.

Montana Historical Society Archives
225 N. Roberts
Helena MT 59620-1201
2011 Legislative Scanner Susie Hamilton

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COLLEGE READINESS

CASE STUDY

Statewide Administration of the ACT: A Key Component in Improving Student Access to College and Work

Since statewide administration of the ACT began in Colorado and Illinois, one or both states have seen the following improvements:

- ***Increases in students' academic achievement that parallel national trends***
- ***Increases in college readiness that parallel national trends***
- ***Increases in the numbers of students considering college***
- ***Increased college enrollment and steady retention***

In addition, statewide administration of the ACT can offer the following benefits:

- ***Improved workforce planning and career counseling information***
- ***Increased economic benefits to students and states***

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Introduction

In recent years there has been an increasing focus among states on the importance of preparing all students for college and work. The educational aspirations of American young people have never been higher, and they continue to grow (U.S. Department of Education, 2005). However, for many, the dream of graduating from college remains a dream. Lacking adequate academic planning and preparation, many students do not even see college as an option. And, unlike college graduates, those who do not go to college or who drop out before completing college face greater obstacles throughout their lives, including higher levels of unemployment (U.S. Department of Labor, 2004), dependence on social assistance (Vernez, Krop, & Rydell, 1999), and incarceration (Harlow, 2003).

These converging issues have led a number of states to raise the expectations of students when they graduate from high school and to use a college admissions and placement program as their high school student assessment program.

Statewide administration of the ACT provides all students, including those who have never considered college as an option, with the opportunity to identify academic strengths and weaknesses, explore educational and career interests, set high standards for academic achievement, and prepare to meet their educational and career goals. Statewide ACT administration also increases awareness among educators and policymakers of the important role that educational planning and preparation play in ensuring college readiness. And, since the ACT is accepted by virtually all postsecondary institutions across the U.S. for college admission and course placement, it provides students with a credential that they can use when they leave high school.

Five states—Colorado, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, and Wyoming—currently administer the ACT to all their public high school students. This case study focuses on results from Colorado and Illinois, where statewide administration has been in place the longest (since 2001). Colorado uses the ACT in the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP) as an eleventh-grade achievement-based assessment that gives the state an indication of how well its public schools are performing at educating students at the K–12 level. Illinois also administers the ACT to all of its public high school juniors as part of its Prairie State Achievement Exam (PSAE). Illinois uses the ACT to measure student progress on meeting state learning standards.

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Average ACT scores in Colorado and Illinois have increased since statewide administration began.

In the years since statewide ACT administration began, improvements have occurred in one or both of the two states in the following areas:

- student academic achievement
- student readiness for college
- the number of students considering college
- college enrollment and retention

In addition, statewide administration of the ACT can offer the following benefits:

- improved workforce planning and career counseling information
- economic benefits to students and states

1. Increases in academic achievement parallel national trends

Since statewide administration of the ACT for high school juniors in Colorado and Illinois began in spring 2001, average ACT scores increased for all high school graduates from both states. As shown in Tables 1 and 2, from 2002 to 2007:

- Average ACT Composite scores increased from 20.1 to 20.4 in Colorado and from 20.1 to 20.5 in Illinois.

- Increases in average ACT scores for *all* Colorado and Illinois students were similar to those seen for all ACT-tested *college-bound* high school graduates nationally. (Average scores nationally increased from 20.2 to 20.7 in English, from 20.6 to 21.0 in Mathematics, from 21.1 to 21.5 in Reading, from 20.8 to 21.0 in Science, and from 20.8 to 21.2 for the Composite score).

- Increases in average ACT scores occurred for all racial/ethnic groups and for both males and females. In Illinois, average ACT English, Science, and Composite scores increased for lower-income students.

Table 1: Average ACT Scores for Colorado High School Graduates

	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
Group	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
All Students	19.3	19.7	19.8	20.1	20.4	20.8	20.2	20.4	20.1	20.4
African American	16.0	16.2	16.8	16.9	17.0	17.3	17.2	17.7	16.9	17.2
Asian American	18.8	19.6	21.0	21.6	19.8	20.6	20.2	21.1	20.1	20.9
Hispanic	15.6	15.8	17.0	17.3	17.0	17.3	17.5	17.7	16.9	17.2
White	20.6	21.4	20.8	21.3	21.7	22.2	21.2	21.7	21.2	21.8
Lower-Income	17.0	16.9	17.9	17.8	18.3	18.3	18.5	18.4	18.1	17.9
Female	19.9	20.4	19.4	19.7	20.8	21.3	19.9	20.2	20.1	20.5
Male	18.7	19.0	20.3	20.4	20.0	20.1	20.5	20.6	20.0	20.2

Note: race/ethnicity and family income are self-reported by ACT-tested students; "Lower-Income" refers to an annual family income of $30,000 or less.

Table 2: Average ACT Scores for Illinois High School Graduates

	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		Composite	
Group	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
All Students	19.4	20.2	20.2	20.4	20.3	20.5	20.0	20.4	20.1	20.5
African American	15.9	16.4	16.5	16.7	16.6	16.8	16.6	17.1	16.5	16.9
Asian American	21.1	22.4	23.5	23.8	21.5	22.1	21.7	22.5	22.1	22.8
Hispanic	16.4	17.2	17.7	18.1	17.6	17.8	17.7	18.1	17.5	17.9
White	21.0	21.8	21.4	21.7	21.7	22.0	21.3	21.7	21.5	22.0
Lower-Income	16.6	17.2	17.8	17.8	17.8	17.6	17.9	18.0	17.6	17.8
Female	19.9	20.5	19.8	19.9	20.6	20.6	19.7	20.0	20.1	20.4
Male	18.8	19.7	20.6	20.8	19.9	20.3	20.4	20.7	20.1	20.5

Increases in average ACT scores in Colorado and Illinois parallel national trends even though all public high school graduates in the two states take the ACT while the majority of ACT-tested students in the nation as a whole are college bound.

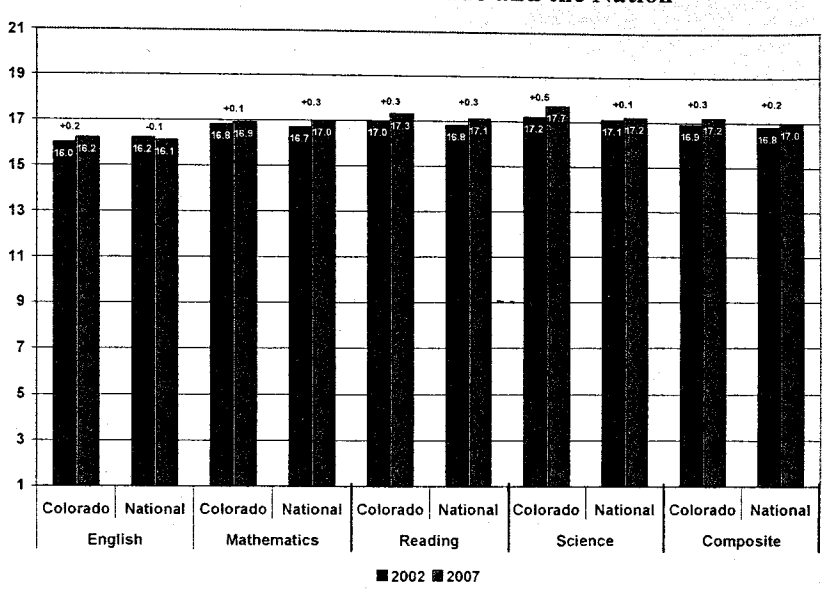
Whereas the score trends are parallel, however, the groups being compared differ. In Colorado and Illinois, *all* public high school graduates, regardless of college intentions, took the ACT. For the nation as a whole, the vast majority of test takers were college-bound students.

Among lower-income students, average ACT Composite scores declined slightly between 2002 and 2007 in Colorado, while they rose slightly in Illinois. At the same time in the nation as a whole the trend for lower-income students was generally flat (ACT, 2007).[1]

For some underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, increases in average ACT scores in Colorado and Illinois were larger than those seen for underrepresented minority ACT-tested high school graduates nationally. For example, Figure 1 presents average ACT score increases for African American students in Colorado and the nation. Relative to African American students nationally, larger increases were observed for Colorado African American students in English, Science, and the Composite score; similar increases were observed in Reading. In Mathematics, Colorado African American students still lagged behind the achievement of African American students nationally.

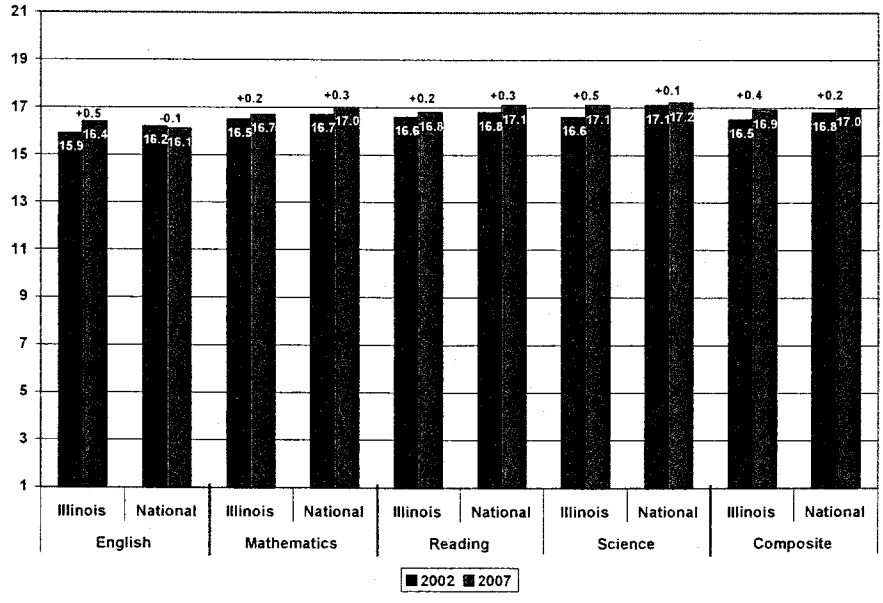
[1] However, in Colorado there was a 21 percent increase between 2002 and 2007 in the number of students in the lower-income group. Illinois saw a 9 percent increase in number over the same time period. Meanwhile, in the nation as a whole, the number of students in the lower-income group increased by only 3 percent between 2002 and 2007.

Figure 1: Average ACT Scores for ACT-Tested African American High School Graduates in Colorado and the Nation



Comparable results were also found for Illinois African American students (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Average ACT Scores for ACT-Tested African American High School Graduates in Illinois and the Nation



Trends in educational achievement, as measured by ACT test scores, in the years since statewide ACT administration began in Colorado and Illinois have roughly paralleled those for the nation as a whole. This is encouraging because unlike in other states, the test-taking populations in Colorado and Illinois include students not planning to attend college.

2. Increases in college readiness parallel national trends

Students who complete the college preparatory core curriculum improve their chances of meeting the ACT College Readiness Benchmarks. Each Benchmark is an indicator of whether a student has the knowledge and skills needed to have a reasonable chance of success in a particular college course. The ACT Benchmarks (English = 18, Mathematics = 22, Reading = 21, and Science = 24) represent the scores required for at least a 50 percent chance of achieving a B or higher grade—or at least a 75 percent chance of a C or higher grade—in entry-level, credit-bearing college English composition, algebra, social sciences, and biology courses, respectively. Therefore, students who meet the ACT Benchmarks are considered to be ready for college and are much more likely to be successful in college.

Tables 3 and 4 illustrate trends in the college readiness of high school graduates in Colorado and Illinois. Improvements in college readiness were found for students from most racial/ethnic groups. The general trend in college readiness for *all* students in Colorado and Illinois was similar to that of college-bound students nationally.

Table 3: Percentages of ACT-Tested Colorado High School Graduates Meeting the College Readiness Benchmarks

	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		No Benchmarks		All Benchmarks	
Group	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
All Students	61	63	34	37	49	47	24	24	33	33	18	20
African American	37	38	13	13	25	21	07	07	59	58	05	04
Asian American	57	62	42	48	45	46	20	28	34	31	17	23
Hispanic	35	36	14	15	25	23	07	08	60	60	05	05
White	71	75	41	46	57	57	29	31	23	21	23	26
Lower-Income	45	43	19	19	34	30	12	10	49	52	08	07
Female	65	67	31	35	51	50	20	22	31	30	16	18
Male	57	58	38	39	46	43	27	26	36	36	21	21

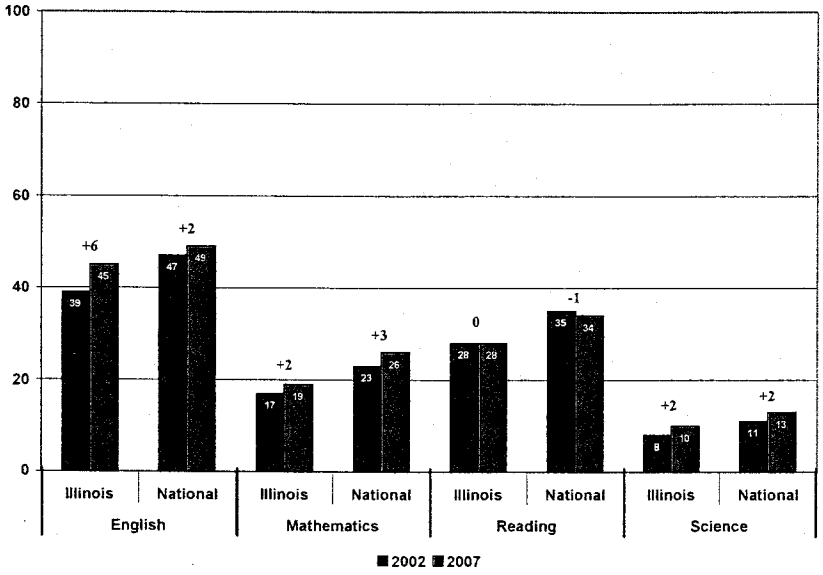
Table 4: Percentages of ACT-Tested Illinois High School Graduates Meeting the College Readiness Benchmarks

	English		Mathematics		Reading		Science		No Benchmarks		All Benchmarks	
Group	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007	2002	2007
All Students	60	65	36	38	46	47	23	25	34	31	19	21
African American	35	39	10	10	20	20	04	05	61	58	03	03
Asian American	70	75	59	61	54	57	34	41	23	20	29	35
Hispanic	39	45	17	19	28	28	08	10	55	50	06	07
White	72	76	46	48	56	58	30	33	23	20	25	28
Lower-Income	41	45	18	17	29	27	10	09	53	51	07	07
Female	64	67	34	34	48	47	20	22	32	30	17	19
Male	57	62	39	41	44	46	27	28	37	33	21	23

For some underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, improvements in college readiness in Colorado and Illinois were greater than those seen for college-bound underrepresented minority ACT-tested high school graduates nationally. For example, Figure 3 presents increases in the percentages of Hispanic

students who are college ready in Illinois and the nation. Relative to Hispanic students nationally, greater improvement in college readiness in English was observed for Illinois Hispanic students, while similar improvement was observed in science. College readiness levels in Reading remained the same for Illinois Hispanic students but decreased by one percentage point for Hispanic students nationally. This happened while *all* students were taking the ACT in Illinois and only college-bound students were taking the ACT in most other states.

Figure 3: Percentages Meeting ACT Benchmarks for ACT-Tested Hispanic High School Graduates in Illinois and the Nation



The same pattern did not hold for Colorado's Hispanic students. Relative to Hispanic students nationally, their improvements in college readiness in English, mathematics, and science were not as large, and their college readiness in reading declined slightly.

Trends in college readiness in the years since statewide ACT administration began in Colorado and Illinois have roughly paralleled those for the nation as a whole. Again, this is particularly noteworthy because *all* students took the ACT in these two states, whereas only college-bound students took the ACT in other states.

For some groups, increases in college readiness exceeded the national trend. They include:

- Asian American students in English, mathematics, and science in Colorado, and in reading and science in Illinois
- All students in Illinois in English
- White and female students in Colorado in mathematics

Other groups, however, actually saw decreases in college readiness between 2002 and 2007. They include, most notably, lower-income students in both Colorado and Illinois in science and social science, and in Colorado in English, as well as African American and male students in Colorado in social science.

3. Students considering college

More Colorado and Illinois students are in the college pipeline since statewide administration of the ACT began.

Statewide administration of the ACT for high school juniors in Colorado and Illinois began in spring 2001. As a result, the numbers of high school graduates completing the ACT increased substantially in both states (see Table 5).

Table 5: Number of High School Graduates Taking the ACT

Colorado	2001[A]	2007
All students	27,260	49,146
African American	845	1,840
Asian American	965	1,585
Hispanic	2,602	6,571
White	19,702	26,304
Lower-Income	4,162	7,977
Illinois		
All students	89,311	140,483
African American	9,871	16,856
Asian American	4,650	5,097
Hispanic	6,597	14,025
White	61,167	72,863
Lower-Income	16,102	24,454

Note: The counts do not sum to the reported totals because of missing data.
[A] Before statewide administration of the ACT.

As shown in Table 5, from 2001 to 2007 the numbers of ACT-tested high school graduates from all racial/ethnic groups increased substantially in both states. This was especially true for African American students and Hispanic students. The number of ACT-tested, lower-income students also increased substantially.

Taking the ACT can encourage many students to explore their educational and career interests, define goals for further education, and begin to think about how to reach these goals. Statewide ACT administration also fosters collegiate outreach to targeted populations. Because most postsecondary institutions begin their recruitment efforts before grade 12, statewide junior-year administration of the ACT facilitates earlier contact between postsecondary institutions and students.

For many students, the statewide administration of the ACT is the only administration of the ACT® test in which they participate. Statewide ACT administration may remove barriers that previously prevented some students from testing (cost of test, Saturday testing, low or no college aspirations or awareness, low self-confidence, etc.). Table 6 presents the percentages of 2007 ACT-tested high school graduates who took the ACT only once, by state and for the nation. Relative to ACT-tested students nationally, more students in Colorado took the ACT only once (70 percent versus 57 percent). In Illinois, where a voucher program exists to support students who wish to retake the ACT, 56 percent of ACT-tested students took the ACT only once. In both Colorado and Illinois, Hispanic students and lower-income students are much more likely to rely on statewide administration as their sole source for ACT testing.

Each year, hundreds of high school graduates in Colorado and Illinois enroll in college who before taking the ACT had not planned to attend college.

Table 6: Percentages of 2007 ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Took the ACT Only Once

Group	Colorado	Illinois	National
All students	70	56	57
African American	67	60	58
Asian American	61	32	57
Hispanic	80	69	73
White	66	50	52
Lower-Income	85	79	67

Statewide ACT administration is a key step towards making college enrollment a reality for high school students from all backgrounds, including many who might otherwise have not considered college as an option. Students who would not ordinarily plan to continue their education beyond high school may become aware of their potential for success in college. This benefit is reflected in the results shown in Table 7; this table records the numbers of students who indicated later that they had no plans for college at the time of statewide testing, but then later enrolled in college.

Table 7: Students with No College Plans at Time of Statewide Administration Who Enrolled in College

Colorado	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Total
Number of students[A]	1,478	1,764	1,684	1,750	1,528	8,204
Number of college enrollees[B]	223	232	237	205	185	1,082
Percent of Total						13
Illinois						
Number of students[A]	3,593	3,940	3,524	3,162	3,310	17,529
Number of college enrollees[B]	643	726	624	563	618	3,174
Percent of Total						18

[A] This row includes the number of students who took the statewide test in 11th grade and who graduated the next year.
[B] Students enrolled in college during the first or second fall term after high school graduation.

By any standard, the number of Colorado and Illinois high school students taking the ACT increased substantially after the implementation of statewide testing, thereby exposing some students to the world of college admissions who would otherwise not have been exposed. In Colorado and Illinois, 13 and 18 percent, respectively, of students who had not planned to attend college at the time they took the ACT ended up enrolling in college. In states without statewide ACT testing, such students generally do not take the ACT.

In the section that follows, we examine college enrollment and retention data for ACT-tested high school graduates from Colorado and Illinois.

4. Increased college enrollment and steady retention

Since statewide implementation of the ACT, both Colorado and Illinois have experienced steady increases in the numbers of ACT-tested high school graduates from all backgrounds enrolling in college the fall following high school graduation (Table 8). From 2002 to 2007, the percentage of Colorado

and Illinois high school graduates who enrolled in college the fall following high school graduation increased by 1 and 2 percentage points, respectively.

College retention rates in Colorado and Illinois held steady even as college enrollmen increased.

Table 8: Percentages of ACT-Tested Colorado and Illinois High School Graduates Who Enrolled in College[A]

State	2002	2006	2007	Increase from 2002–2007
Colorado				
ACT-Tested H.S. Graduates[A]	43,253	47,105	49,146	5,893
ACT-Tested Fall Freshmen	23,373	25,757	26,899	3,526
Percent Enrolled	54	55	55	1
Illinois				
ACT-Tested H.S. Graduates[A]	127,219	137,399	140,483	13,264
ACT-Tested Fall Freshmen	77,386	85,933	88,270	10,884
Percent Enrolled	61	63	63	2

[A] Counts differ from those in the ACT High School Profile Report for 2002; duplicate records with differing Social Security numbers were dropped.

Not only are more students in Colorado and Illinois enrolling in college after high school graduation, but most are also returning for their second year of college. In Table 9, we display the numbers and percentages of students who enrolled in college in the fall of their high school graduation year and who returned to college the subsequent fall, whether to the same college or to another.

- 69 percent of Colorado's 2002 and 2006 high school graduates who enrolled in college returned to the same college for their second year, and 83 percent returned to any college for their second year.

- 75 percent of Illinois's 2002 high school graduates and 74 percent of Illinois's 2006 high school graduates who enrolled in college returned to the same college for their second year, and 85 to 86 percent returned to any college for their second year, representing slight declines in both measures.

- The retention rates in Illinois and Colorado are close to those for 2006 ACT-tested high school graduates nationally even though there was a substantial increase in the number of public high school graduates enrolling in college who had not originally planned to enroll.

Table 9: ACT-Tested High School Graduates Who Enrolled in College and Returned for Second Year[A]

	2002		2006	
	No.	Pct.	No.	Pct.
Colorado				
Returned to Same College in Year 2	16,134	69	17,874	69
Returned to Any College in Year 2	19,349	83	21,270	83
Number Enrolled	23,373		25,757	
Illinois				
Returned to Same College in Year 2	58,151	75	63,859	74
Returned to Any College in Year 2	66,615	86	73,387	85
Number Enrolled	77,386		85,933	
National[A]				
Returned to Same College in Year 2			624,788	73
Returned to Any College in Year 2			721,249	85
Number Enrolled			850,108	

[A] Retention data were not available for 2002 ACT-tested high school graduates nationally.

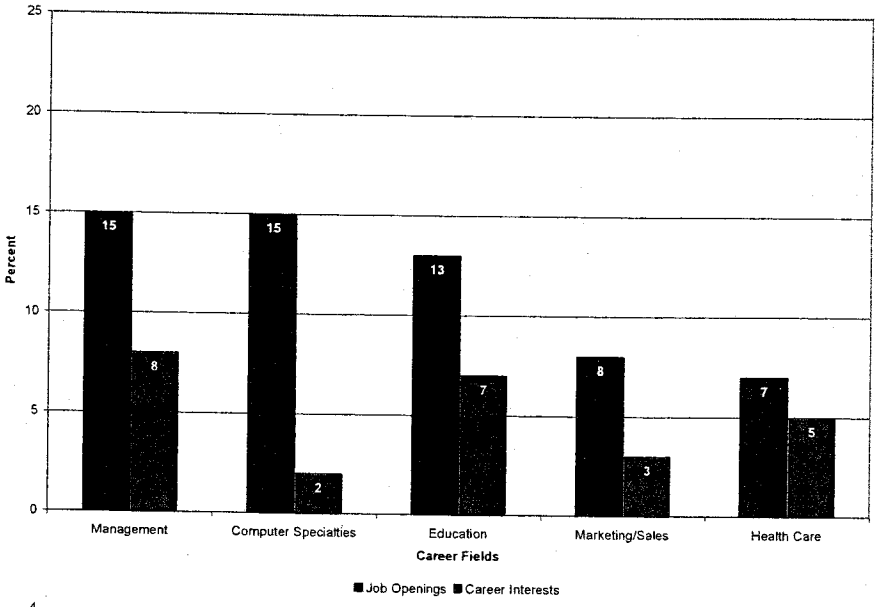
Statewide implementation of the ACT exposed some Colorado and Illinois students to the world of college admissions who would otherwise not have been exposed. Some of these students went further and explored the possibility of enrolling in college. Some of those students ended up enrolling, and some of them re-enrolled a second year. The second year re-enrollment rates for Colorado and Illinois college freshmen were close to the national average even with the addition of students new to the idea of going to college.

5. Improved workforce planning and career counseling information

As part of the ACT, students respond to questions about their occupational preferences. They also complete ACT's Interest Inventory, which provides results that allow them to explore programs of study and occupations that are in keeping with their interests. Career counselors can use this information to help guide students towards occupations and postsecondary education and training programs that are aligned with their interests. Further, they can identify students whose interests are congruent with expected opportunities in the state's job market. For example, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (2008) estimates that in Colorado over the next eight years there will be an annual average of 86,123 job openings, but opportunities will vary by occupation. Every high school student taking the ACT lists their occupational choices. With that information, career counselors can inform these students if there will be a strong demand for their preferred professions in their state and help them prepare for those careers or suggest others.

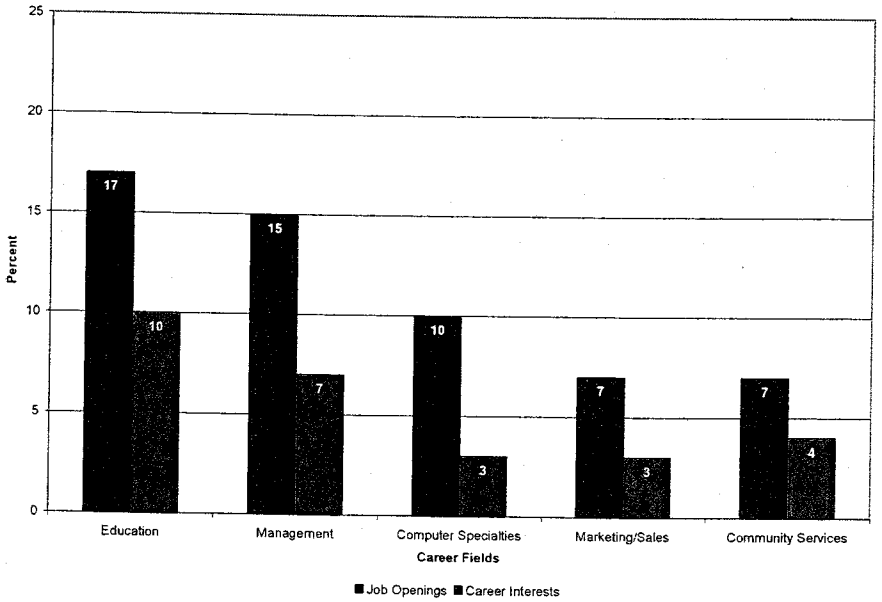
In addition to informing individual students, results from the statewide ACT can help states forecast the supply and demand of occupations. By comparing each cohort's career interests to expected career opportunities, state planners and policymakers can get a better idea of where shortages will occur. (ACT's most recent comparisons for Colorado and Illinois appear in Figures 4 and 5, respectively.) With such information, states can initiate programs that fulfill projected state workforce needs.

Figure 4: Projected Annual Job Openings and Colorado High School Students' Interests in High-Growth Colorado Career Fields[A,B]



[A] State projections 2004–2014 provided by Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (2008).
[B] Based on 2008 ACT-tested Colorado students (n = 30,771) with valid career information.

Figure 5: Projected Annual Job Openings and Illinois High School Students' Interests in High-Growth Illinois Career Fields[A,B]



[A] State projections 2004–2014 provided by Illinois Department of Employment Security (2008).
[B] Based on 2008 ACT-tested Illinois students (n = 87,718) with valid career information.

research readiness results

The ACT®

for your state

AMERICAS MOST WIDELY ACCEPTED COLLEGE ENTRANCE EXAM

Access and Opportunity for All Students

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

- Accepted for college admissions and course placement at all 4-year colleges and universities and the NCAA
- Exposes students to the full range of postsecondary options
- Encourages students to take rigorous college-prep coursework
- Measures the knowledge and skills critical to college and career success
- Promotes exploration of careers and college majors that match students' interests

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Curriculum-based educational and career planning tool that assesses progress towards state and college readiness standards
- Promotes educational and career planning
- Proven to reduce college remediation rates
- Correlates with increases in college enrollment, persistence, and success
- Compare results across states
- Increased opportunities for minority, middle and low income, and male students
- Economic Impact – Students with a bachelor's degree earn almost $1,000,000 more over their lifetime than students with a high school diploma, resulting in a higher taxable income, which results in lower expenditures on welfare and other assistance programs.[1]

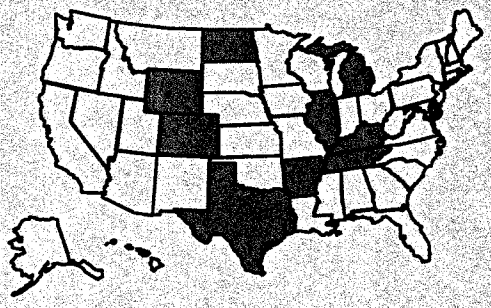
[1] United States Department of Labor—2004

STATE STANDARDS MATCH REPORTS

State Standards Match Reports provide user-friendly information about how ACT's tests align with your state's standards.

Find your state standards match report at:
http://www.act.org/education/statematch/

STATEWIDE USE OF THE ACT



STATEWIDE TESTING PROGRAM FEATURES

- Allows for use of state IDs
- Weekday administration
- Expanded range of accommodations to maximize participation
- Has been approved for use in state models for NCLB and AYP accountability
- Aggregate reporting
- **Quick turnaround**—Results and follow-up materials shipped in 3–8 weeks
- College and Career Readiness System—Part of a longitudinal growth model for grades 8–12

POWERFUL PREDICTOR

Empirically derived College Readiness Benchmarks developed to predict first-year postsecondary success.

LINKAGE REPORTS

Enhances the value of the **assessment**, when used with EXPLORE® and PLAN®, by providing the 3rd data point for analysis of changes when students move from grade 8 or 9 to grade 10 and from grade 10 to grade 11 or 12.

MORE INFORMATION

Addition benefits of statewide administration can be found at:
www.act.org/stateservices

ACT®
data-driven solutions for college and career readiness and success

Montana State Legislature

2011 Session

Exhibit 8

This exhibit is a booklet which can not be scanned, therefore only the front cover/table of content and 10 pages have been scanned to aid in your research.

The original exhibits are on file at the Montana Historical Society and may be viewed there.

Montana Historical Society Archives
225 N. Roberts
Helena MT 59620-1201

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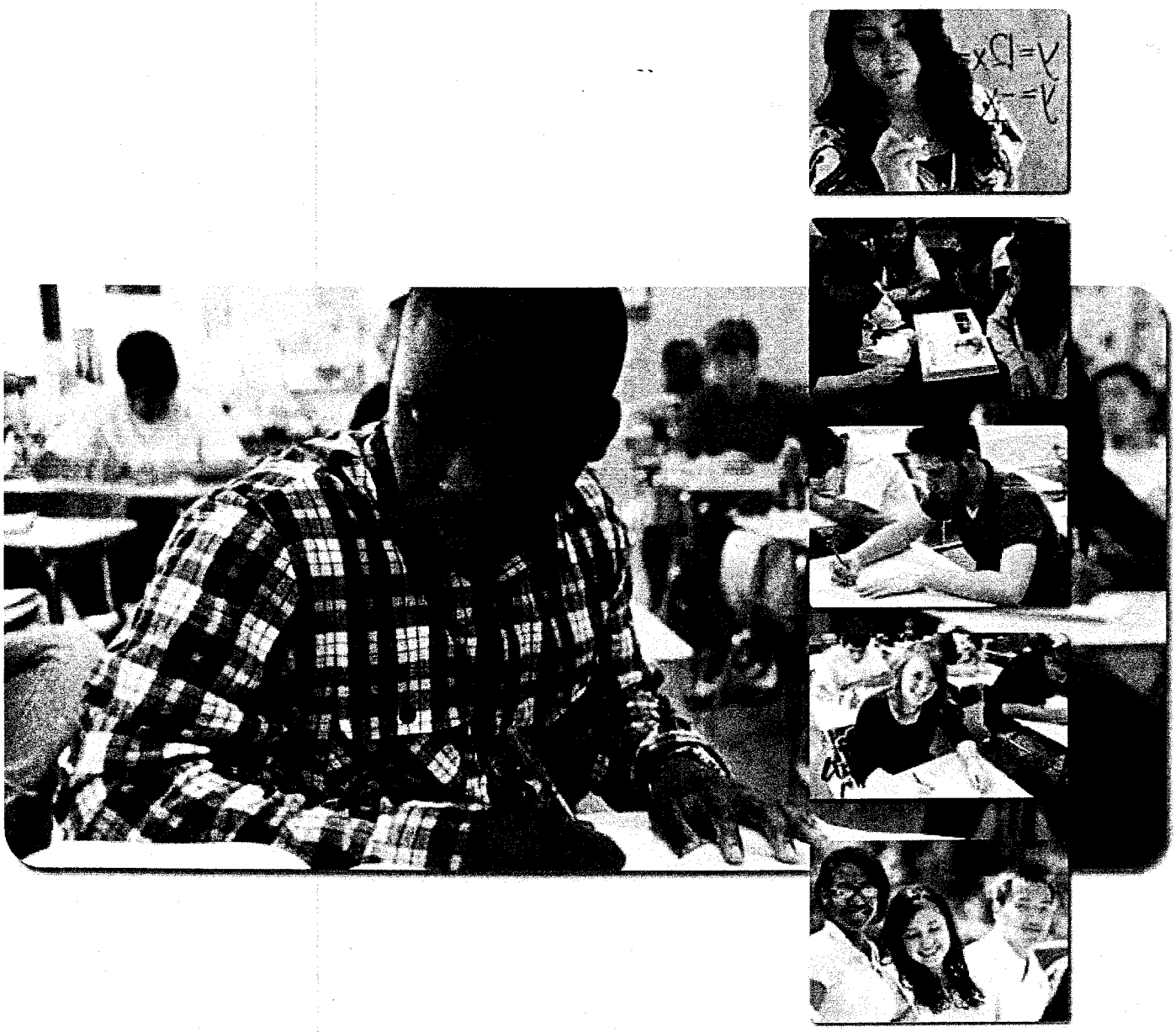
EXHIBIT NO. 8
DATE 2.2.11
BILL NO.

COLLEGE READINESS

A First Look at the Common Core and College and Career Readiness



ACT

A First Look at the Common Core

Forty-one states have adopted the Common Core State Standards. Now, implementing the standards—to realize their purpose of increasing the college and career readiness of our high school graduates—takes on primary importance. This transition to implementation introduces a number of challenging questions: What is the baseline of student performance on the Common Core State Standards, and what reasonable expectations should we hold for them moving forward? What does student college and career readiness look like today through the lens of the Standards?

ACT is pleased to provide this first look at student performance relative to the Common Core State Standards and college and career readiness. The report establishes a baseline of performance on the Standards by using a sample comprising a quarter-million typical high school students, and then discusses how states, districts, and schools can support the implementation of the Common Core State Standards going forward.

The period between Common Core adoption and Common Core implementation offers an important opportunity to evaluate and reframe education policy and practice at all levels. ACT believes this report provides information that stakeholders can use to understand the current state of college and career readiness of students and to begin implementing programs and policies that best support the Common Core.

Now is the time to provide students with more effective opportunities to prepare for education and workplace success.

A Baseline for College and Career Readiness According to the Common Core State Standards

The Common Core State Standards and College and Career Readiness

The Common Core State Standards Initiative represents one of the most significant reforms to U.S. education in recent history. The efforts of 48 states, two territories, and the District of Columbia have—for the first time—given consensus to educators on the essential knowledge and skills necessary for the college and career readiness of our nation's students. As of October 2010, 41 states have adopted the Common Core State Standards.

ACT is pleased to have played a leading role in the development of the Common Core State Standards. Not only did the initiative draw on ACT's longitudinal research identifying the knowledge and skills essential for success in postsecondary education and workforce training, but ACT's College Readiness Standards™ were also among the resources used in the creation of the Common Core State Standards.

ACT has long defined college and career readiness as the acquisition of the knowledge and skills a student needs to enroll and succeed in credit-bearing, first-year courses at a postsecondary institution (such as a two- or four-year college, trade school, or technical school) without the need for remediation. ACT's definition of college and career readiness was adopted by the Common Core State Standards Initiative and provides a unifying goal upon which educators and policymakers now must act.

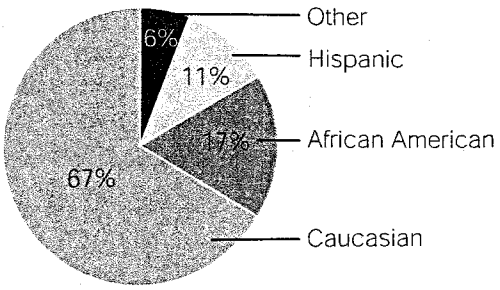
As states begin to implement the Common Core and raise expectations for what students should know and be able to do by the end of high school, it is important to understand the level of college and career readiness of today's students and use all available data to inform decisions related to education policy and practice. Recognizing that no state has fully implemented the Common Core State Standards, ACT identified a way to estimate performance relative to the Common Core. This report summarizes those findings.

Given ACT's leading role in the development of the Common Core State Standards, we classified ACT test items to the standards, clusters, and domains of the Common Core State Standards (e.g., Key Ideas and Details in Reading, Number and Quantity in Mathematics, Conventions of Standard English in Language) to best estimate student performance on the Common Core in advance of state implementation efforts.[1] Our work was driven by three basic questions that have implications for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards:

1. Given the lack of available data, what is the best estimate of current student performance on the Common Core State Standards using ACT college and career readiness data?
2. What are students' current strengths and weaknesses on the Common Core State Standards?
3. What steps can district, state, and federal policymakers and education leaders take to help ensure an effective transition to the Common Core State Standards?

A Unique Opportunity

These three essential research questions framed ACT's analysis of the test results of 256,765 11th-grade students in several states who were administered selected forms of the ACT® Plus Writing (i.e., multiple-choice tests in English, Mathematics, Reading, and Science, plus the ACT Writing Test) in spring 2010. The students represented in this report were not self-selected, as traditional ACT examinees are, but rather represent all students who took the ACT as part of their states' annual testing programs. The group spans the full range of abilities and college aspirations, are from a range of communities and schools, and includes students tested under standard conditions as well as under accommodations. In other words, the sample comprises typical 11th-grade students like those found in high schools all across the United States. (See Figure 1.)



Tested Cohort by Race/Ethnicity
N=256,765

Figure 1

Methodology

Since performance indicators have not yet been established for the Common Core State Standards, this report uses ACT's research-based College Readiness Benchmarks to estimate college- and career-ready performance levels on each of the clusters of Common Core State Standards. For each cluster for which ACT has data (i.e., all but Speaking & Listening and Research), we report the percentage of students in the 11th-grade sample who met or exceeded the performance level of college- and career-ready students on the test items associated with that Common Core cluster. We report this information for both the total group and for Caucasian, African American, and Hispanic students.

So how well are students performing on the content clusters of the Common Core State Standards? Helping to raise awareness of the answer to this question allows educators and policymakers the opportunity to focus efforts on improving student performance on the Common Core and increasing the college and career readiness of ***all*** students.

Overall Results

The results of this analysis should be used with caution, as they are based on results of students who were administered the ACT as

The ACT College Readiness Benchmarks are the minimum scores required on the ACT subject tests for high school students to have approximately a 75 percent chance of earning a grade of C or better, or approximately a 50 percent chance of earning a grade of B or better, in selected courses commonly taken by first-year college students: English Composition; College Algebra; social sciences courses such as History, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, or Economics; and Biology.

The Benchmark scores on the ACT tests are 18 in English, 22 in Mathematics, 21 in Reading, and 24 in Science; on the ACT Writing Test, a score of 7 or above indicates readiness for college-level writing assignments.

part of their statewide assessment at a time prior to the adoption of the Common Core State Standards. Given that states were teaching to and assessing different sets of standards, it can be argued that students were not adequately prepared for an assessment of the Common Core State Standards. We agree; however, the analysis is intended not to focus on student performance on current state standards, but to shed light on current student achievement levels relative to the Common Core State Standards. As states adopt the Common Core State Standards and begin aligning instructional practices, resources, and assessments to college and career readiness—as some have been doing for a number of years—the expectation is that all students will be adequately prepared for such an assessment. Until such time, this analysis serves as a starting point for assessing achievement relative to the Common Core in advance of full state implementation efforts.

Figure 2 shows the overall percentage of students in the report sample who met ACT's College Readiness Benchmarks compared to the percentage of all ACT-tested 2010 high school graduates. In all three areas of the Common Core State Standards—English, Reading, and Math—the percentage of students in the sample is less than what we see in the 2010 ACT-tested group. This is to be expected; as mentioned previously, the report sample includes all students who took the ACT as part of their statewide assessment and includes students with a range of abilities who tested under normal and accommodated conditions.

Our analysis indicates that across all Common Core domains, strands, and clusters, only one-third to one-half of the 11th-grade students are reaching a college and career readiness level of achievement. Moreover, for each Common Core domain, strand, and cluster, the percentages of Caucasian students who met or exceeded the performance of college- and career-ready students were uniformly higher than the corresponding percentages of African American or Hispanic students.

These results indicate that we must begin immediately to strengthen teaching and learning in all areas of the Common Core, with particular focus on raising college and career readiness rates of African American, Hispanic, and other underserved students.

Detailed Results

The following pages report student performance within each Common Core State Standards category in English Language Arts & Literacy (pp. 4–5) and Mathematics (pp. 6–7), reported for all students and by three racial/ethnic subgroups. Student performance is reported as the percentage of all students in the study who met or exceeded the performance level of college- and career-ready students in each category of that Standard.

ACT Tested 2010 High School Graduates v. Report Sample

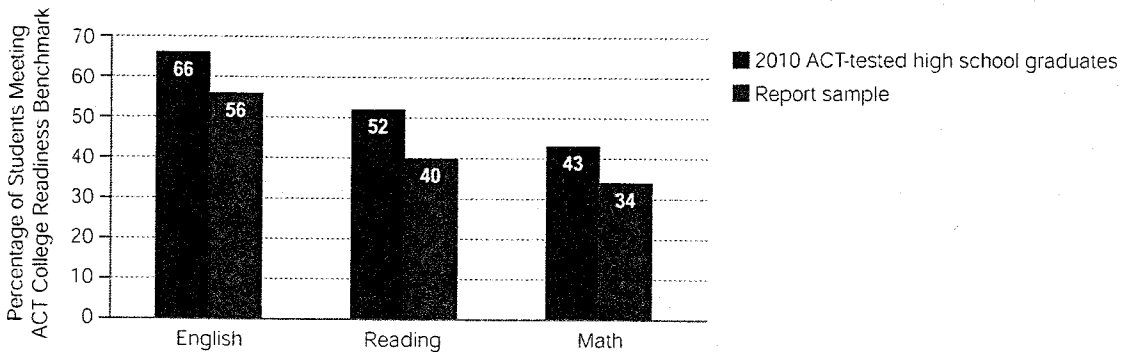
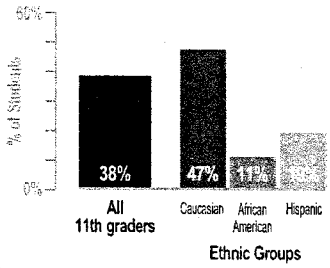


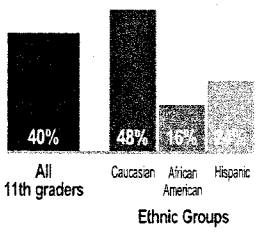
Figure 2

Common Core English Language Arts (ELA) & Literacy

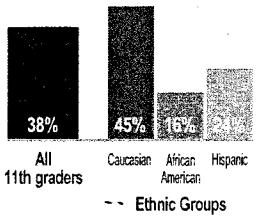
Reading



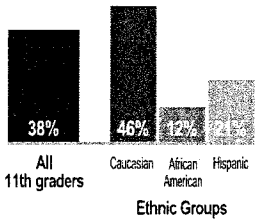
Key Ideas & Details



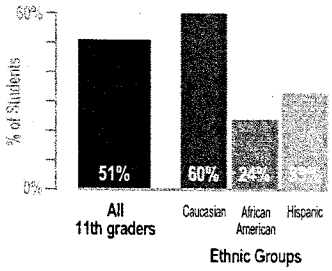
Craft & Structure



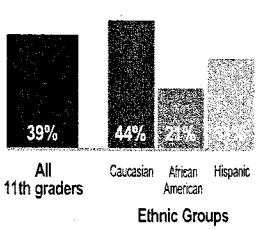
Integration of Knowledge & Ideas



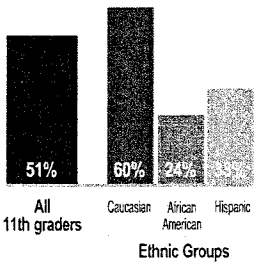
Writing



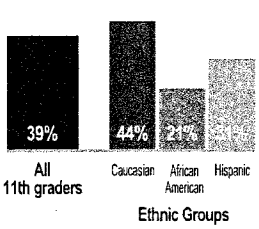
Text Types & Purposes



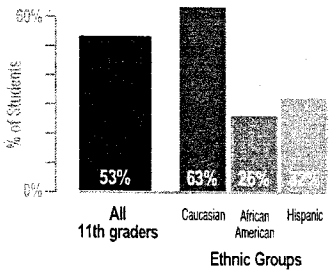
Production & Distribution of Writing



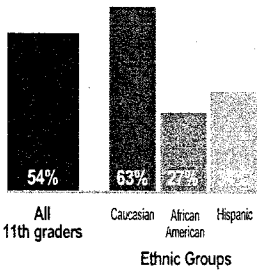
Range of Writing



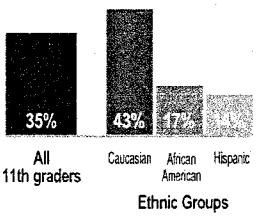
Language



Conventions of Standard English

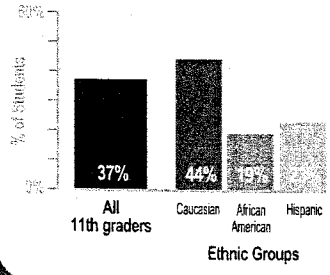


Knowledge of Language & Vocabulary Acquisition and Use

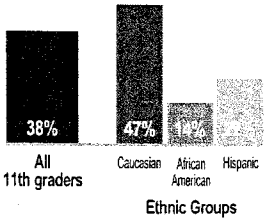


Common Core Literacy Scores

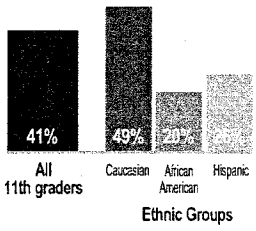
Literature



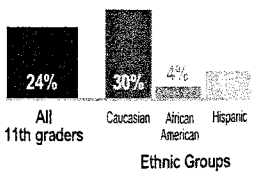
Informational Text

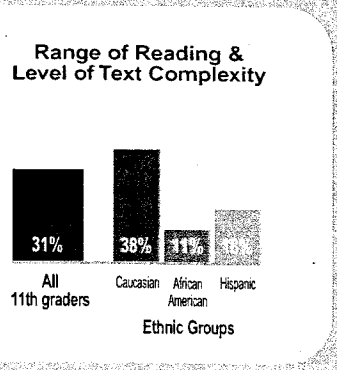


Literacy in Social Studies



Literacy in Science





A First Look at Common Core ELA & Literacy

- **Too few students are able to understand complex text.** Relative to the Common Core, only 31% of students are performing at a college- and career-ready level with respect to successfully understanding complex text. The Common Core State Standards define a "staircase" of increasing text complexity designed to move all students to college- and career-ready levels of reading by no later than the end of high school. **To help prepare all students for the challenges of reading at the college and career readiness level, states should ensure that students are reading progressively more complex texts as they advance through the grades.**

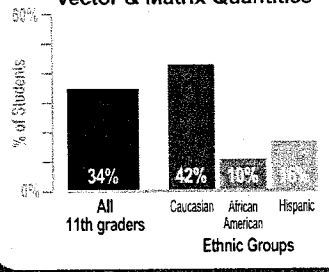
- **Increased focus is needed on some key aspects of language.** Two areas of emphasis in the Common Core State Standards for Language are (1) students' knowledge of language varieties and ability to use language skillfully and (2) students' ability to acquire and use a rich vocabulary. Relative to the Common Core, only 35% of students are performing at college- and career-ready levels with respect to these skills. To help all students develop a sufficient command of these language skills, states should ensure that students gain sufficient understanding of how language varies by context; how to use language effectively for different audiences, purposes, and tasks; and how to gain and use a vocabulary adequate for college and careers.
  - Students should master the grade-specific standards for Common Core Language Standard 3, which, beginning formally in grade 2 and building throughout the grades, **focuses on such areas as recognizing differences between formal and informal English and between spoken and written English, using language precisely and concisely, and maintaining consistency in style and tone.**
  - Students would also benefit from greater and more systematic attention to vocabulary development. This can include direct vocabulary instruction and a steadily increasing emphasis on helping students acquire vocabulary through reading. Particularly important is that students gain what the Standards refer to as general academic vocabulary: words and phrases that are often encountered in written texts in a variety of subjects but that are rarely heard in spoken language.

- **Content-area reading needs strengthening.** Students struggle when reading texts in content areas, especially in science, where only 24% of students are able to work with science materials at a level that would make them college and career ready. To help all students achieve sufficient literacy skills in history/social studies and in science and technical subjects, as well as in English language arts, states must **ensure that teachers in these subject areas use their unique content knowledge to foster students' ability to read, write, and communicate in the various disciplines.**
  - Specifically, **English language arts teachers in middle and upper grades should incorporate a particular type of informational text—literary nonfiction—into the traditional curriculum of stories, dramas, and poems.**
  - Teachers in other subject areas should use their own subject-area expertise to help students learn to read, write, and communicate effectively in their specific field.
  - The Common Core State Standards in reading are explicitly modeled on the idea of shared responsibility for students' literacy development. States and districts should therefore prepare middle and high school content-area teachers for this role by providing professional development opportunities that build the reading instruction capacity of content-area specialists.

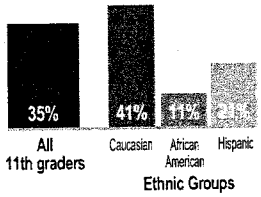
Common Core Mathematics

Number & Quantity

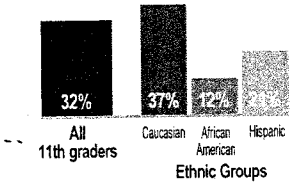
Real Number System; Quantities; The Complex Number System; Vector & Matrix Quantities



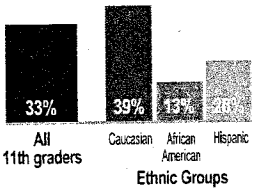
Algebra



Seeing Structure in Expressions

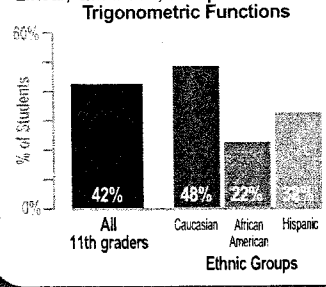


Creating Equations

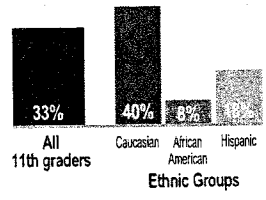


Functions

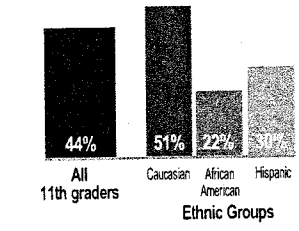
Interpreting Functions; Building Functions; Linear, Quadratic, & Exponential Models; Trigonometric Functions



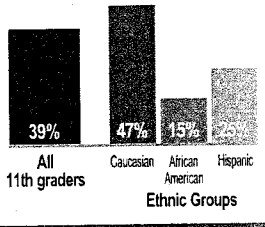
Geometry



Congruence

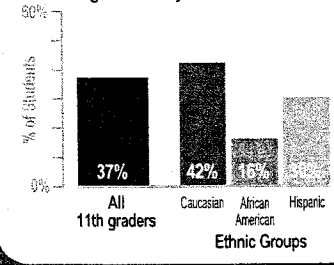


Similarity, Right Triangles & Trigonometry; Circles



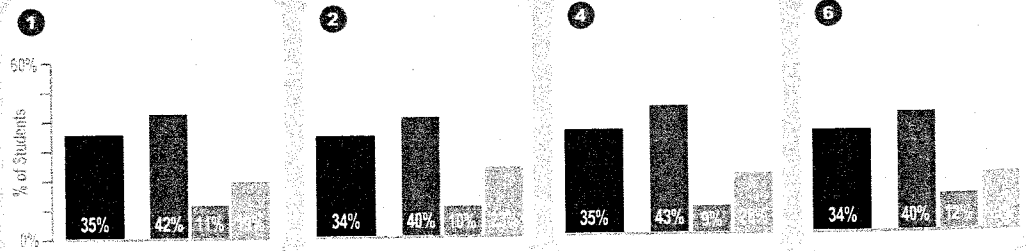
Statistics & Probability

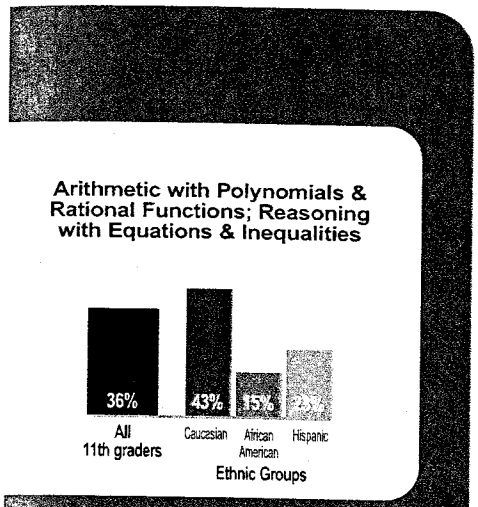
Interpreting Categorical & Quantitative Data; Making Inferences & Justifying Conclusions; Conditional Probability & the Rules of Probability; Using Probability to Make Decisions

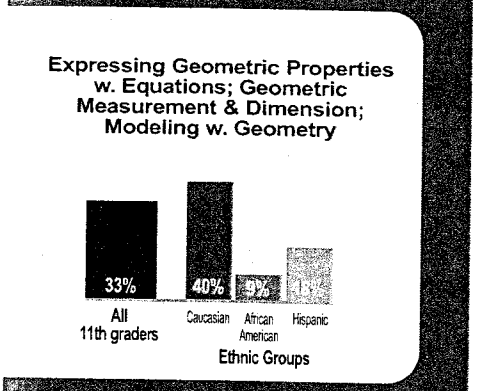


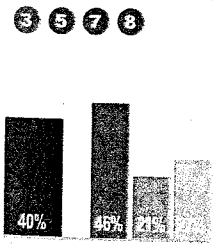
Mathematical Practices

1. Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
2. Reason abstractly and quantitatively
3. Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
4. Model with mathematics
5. Use appropriate tools strategically
6. Attend to precision
7. Look for and make use of structure
8. Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning









A First Look at Common Core Mathematics

- **Increased focus is needed on the foundations of mathematics.** The low performance by students on Number & Quantity (34%) in the Common Core is of particular concern because these skills are the foundation for success in the other Common Core mathematics conceptual categories (e.g., Algebra, Functions, Modeling, Geometry, and Statistics & Probability). Students need to make *meaning* of numbers, operations, and arithmetic expressions, and to use their understanding to solve problems, reason about mathematics, and explain their thinking. **To increase math performance, states need to ensure K–8 curriculum and instruction require rigorous understanding of the concepts in Number & Quantity from the earliest grades.**
  - In the early grades, students will benefit from problem solving in novel contexts and hands-on experiences with increasingly sophisticated quantities and their measurement.
  - In middle school and high school, teachers should lead students to see connections between Number & Quantity and other Common Core mathematics conceptual categories, particularly Algebra.

- **Math interventions are needed for students who are falling behind at the earliest grades.** Across the board, Hispanic and African American students performed well below their Caucasian counterparts in all Common Core math domains. **States must ensure that teachers and students have the resources necessary to identify struggling math students as early as possible (K–4) so that proper interventions are made.** Providing teachers and students with adequate opportunities to collect achievement data that function diagnostically—data collected frequently and from both formative and summative assessments—is crucial to supporting students' learning progressions and for optimal growth to occur.

- **Greater understanding of mathematical processes and practices are needed.** For each of the Common Core Mathematical Practices standards, only about one-third of students reached the college- and career-ready level. States and districts must ensure that conceptual understanding is emphasized for all students in mathematics. More specifically, students at all grade levels need to be:
  - working and solving challenging nonroutine problems;
  - explaining methods and justifying conclusions;
  - predicting and conjecturing about things like unknown numbers, measurements, quantitative relations, the behavior of functions, how well a model fits reality, the effectiveness of different solution methods, and the way probabilistic events occur; and
  - looking for patterns and structure in places like diagrams, equations, number systems, proofs, problems, tables, graphs, and real-world objects.

Where Do We Go from Here?

Clearly there is room for increased student achievement relative to the Standards—and to college and career readiness—across all Common Core domains, strands, and clusters; so where do we start? What instructional strategies and diagnostic tools are necessary for districts, schools, and classroom teachers to articulate the Standards to students, identify students in need of improvement, and target instructional interventions? What policy changes are required at the state and federal levels to enable those changes? These are the complex questions that educators and policymakers at all levels of our education system need to answer before implementing the Common Core.

Recommendations for Instructional Strategies and Interventions

The findings in this report indicate that much work must be done to prepare all students for the rigors of postsecondary education and workforce training programs by the time they graduate high school. But improving the preparation of students for life beyond high school is larger than simply focusing on results at the high school level—this is a systems issue that must be addressed by all levels (P–16) of our education systems. Improving college and career readiness is crucial to the development of a diverse and talented labor force that can maintain and increase U.S. economic competitiveness throughout the world. It is our collective responsibility—educators and policymakers alike—to ensure that each and every student is prepared and on track for success from the earliest grades through high school graduation and beyond.

ACT recommends that state and local education practitioners and policymakers begin now to align current curricula with the Common Core State Standards. This process should result in the development of high-quality lessons and instructional units aligned to the standards. Beyond that initial step, we must also make every effort to help educators effectively incorporate these Standards into daily instruction and practice, to ensure that the quality, consistency, and rigor of the curriculum are aligned with those Standards.

ACT recommends that states provide training and resources to districts and classroom teachers to create rigorous instructional units and curricular tools for moving students to higher levels of performance as required by the Common Core State Standards. Teachers need to have access to model lessons and instructional units aligned to the Standards. Teachers need to have access to formative assessment item pools that provide useful feedback about student progress toward meeting the Standards. Teachers also need to be able to use the results of such formative assessments to guide instructional interventions for students who are not yet college and career ready. Perhaps most critical of all—teachers and school leaders need a solid foundation of professional development to support their effective and efficient use of these new resources.

ACT research on the practices of high-performing schools indicates that there are core practices that can help educators overcome the challenges our education systems face in increasing student achievement, while also allowing states to remain true to the high expectations found in the Common Core State Standards. Based on this research, we strongly encourage

education leaders to consider the following practices:

- **Create a school culture of high expectations.** The Standards can identify rigorous learning outcomes, but the real work of meeting those expectations rests in the day-to-day efforts in our classrooms. That work can only succeed if everyone agrees on the goal. ACT research suggests that the inconsistent and sometimes alarmingly low expectations held by our nation's educators regarding what students can achieve academically pose a serious challenge to meeting Common Core's goal of having all students college and career ready no later than the end of high school. Our research shows that high-performing schools—including schools that serve a large percentage of low-income students—focus relentlessly on setting high expectations, develop challenging academic objectives systemically, and embody those expectations in all facets of their core work. The learning progressions embedded in the Common Core State Standards can promote those efforts in all schools by providing a framework that teachers can use to develop grade-appropriate instruction that helps advance all students to college and career readiness.

- **Use data to create individualized responses to students' needs.** The Standards implementation process affords an opportunity to substantially rethink how we approach student monitoring, goal setting, and support programs at the local level. Accelerating the college and career readiness of our students will require that we create new approaches for using student data to empower educators to personalize student learning goals, classroom instruction, and intervention strategies. The past decade has spurred a dramatic increase in the types of student data available, but the next decade will require a dramatic improvement in how we use this data to strengthen instruction, interventions, and decision making.

- **Foster an atmosphere of support and collaboration among teachers.** Focus efforts to increase the quality and intensity of instruction through sustained professional development initiatives and professional learning communities. At the heart of the Standards is the need for high-quality, responsive, and engaging instruction. Necessary efforts to align and improve curricula must be accompanied by a sustained effort to systematically improve the quality of instruction. ACT's research shows that the incorporation of a challenging curriculum can have a significantly positive impact on students' college and career readiness, but these gains are even greater when school leaders couple a rigorous curriculum with a comprehensive professional development and support program.

Recommendations for Policymakers

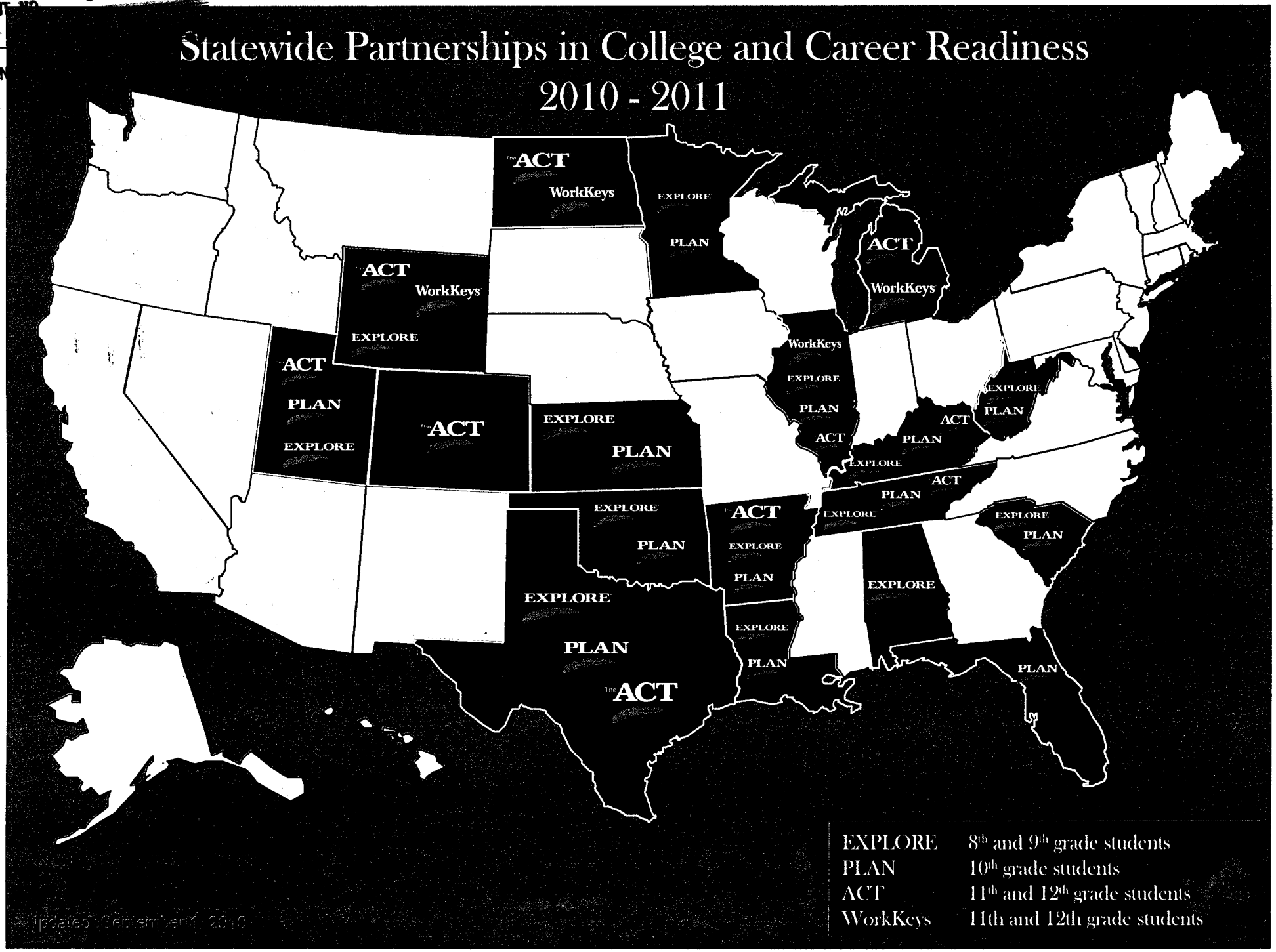
In addition to offering instructional recommendations for states and districts, this report also suggests that there are broad implications for policymakers as our nation ramps up for the implementation of the Common Core State Standards. The estimated performance of students relative to the Standards raises the question: What steps can policymakers at the federal, state, and district levels take to help create the conditions in which educators can succeed in accelerating the college and career readiness of our nation's students?

EXHIBIT NO. 8

DATE

BILL N

Statewide Partnerships in College and Career Readiness
2010 - 2011



Montana State Legislature

2011 Session

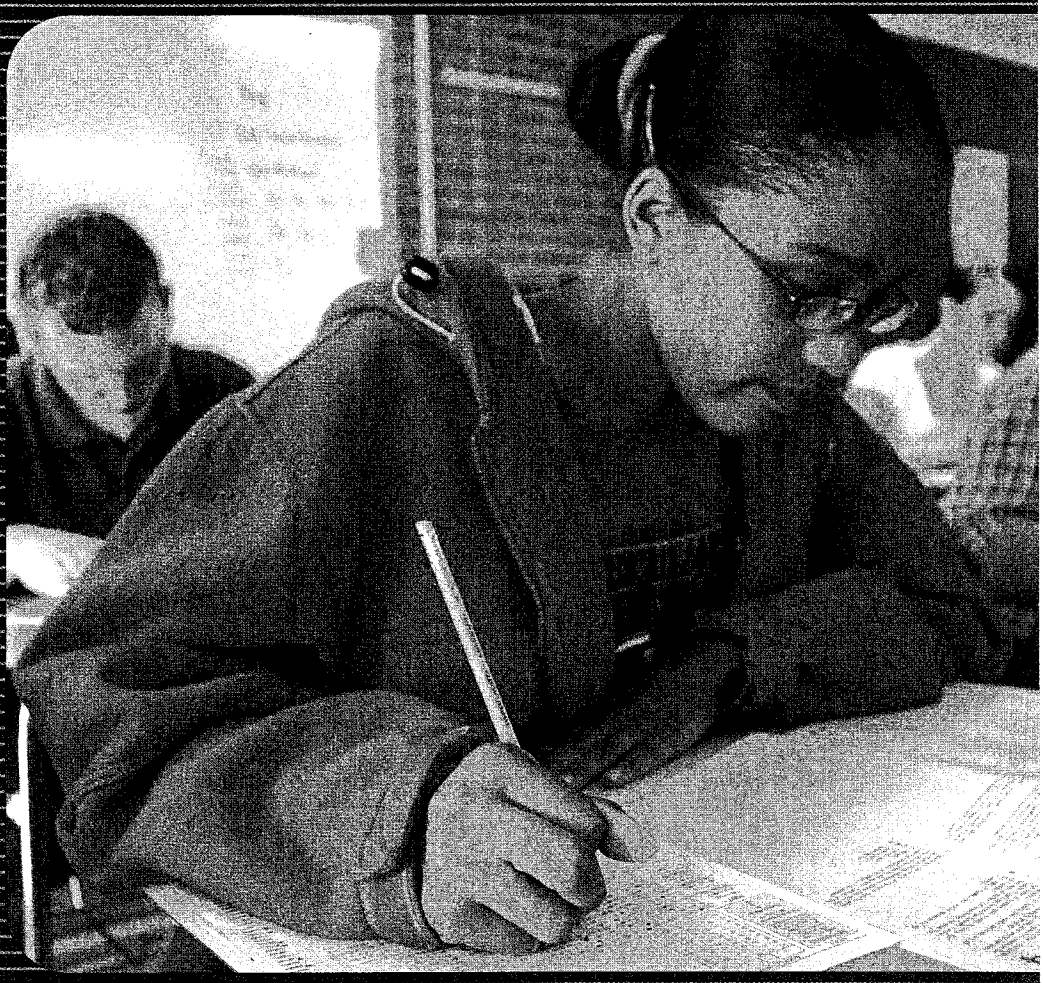
Exhibit 8

This exhibit is a booklet which can not be scanned, therefore only the front cover/table of content and 10 pages have been scanned to aid in your research.

The original exhibits are on file at the Montana Historical Society and may be viewed there.

EXHIBIT NO. 8
DATE 2.2.11
BILL NO.

Educator's Guide to the ACT® Writing Test



ACT®

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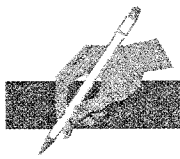


Introduction

Writing has always been and will continue to be one of the essential skills for college readiness and success. Since its inception, the ACT® program has included a multiple-choice format English Test to measure students' understanding of the skills necessary for effective writing. Beginning in February 2005, students taking the ACT also had the option of adding a 30-minute direct writing test to their examination. In this publication, you will obtain an overview of the ACT Writing Test, be introduced to how student essays are scored, learn how you can use results from the Writing Test to help your students improve their writing, and discover ways to integrate preparation for the Writing Test into your Language Arts curriculum. As a writing teacher, you are your students' best resource for understanding how to perform to the best of their ability on the ACT Writing Test. This guide was designed for you.

Part I
Overview of the ACT Writing Test

The Place of the Writing Test in the ACT

The principle underlying the development of the ACT derives from the work of E. F. Lindquist (1901–1978). Lindquist, a pioneer in educational measurement and a cofounder of ACT, devoted much of his professional life to demonstrating that the best way to gauge students' readiness for college is to measure as directly as possible their mastery of the knowledge and skills required for success in college studies. The tests of educational development in the ACT measure a broad range of educationally significant knowledge and skills. The tests emphasize such proficiencies as reasoning, analysis, problem-solving, and integration of information from various sources, as well as the application of these proficiencies to the kinds of tasks that college students are expected to perform.

The English and Writing tests in the ACT battery are intended to complement one another and together provide a comprehensive assessment of students' writing proficiency. The English Test is a 45-minute multiple-choice test that measures students' understanding of the conventions of standard written English (punctuation, grammar and usage, and sentence structure) and of rhetorical skills (strategy, organization, and style). The Writing Test is a 30-minute essay test with a single prompt question. It is designed to evaluate student ability to make and articulate judgments, develop and sustain a position, organize and present ideas logically, and communicate clearly in

original writing. The combined result from both tests will provide information about students' ability to make revising and editing decisions in a multiple-choice setting and their ability to produce a direct writing sample.

Educators should note that ACT offers the Writing Test as an *optional* component of the ACT. Students should determine whether or not to take the Writing Test based on the requirements or recommendations of the colleges to which they plan to apply. College decisions about the Writing Test are found at **www.actstudent.org**. The Composite score and subscores for the multiple-choice sections of the test are not affected by the Writing Test. Instead, when students take the ACT Plus Writing, they receive two additional scores: a Combined English/Writing score and a subscore for the Writing Test. Examples of reports and a guide to interpreting and using scores from these two tests are included in Part III of this guide.

Development of the ACT Writing Test

The Writing Test is an achievement test designed to measure students' writing proficiency. It was developed to reflect the type of writing found in rigorous high school writing curricula and expected of students entering first-year college composition courses.

In developing the Writing Test, ACT examined secondary and postsecondary writing practice, instruction, and assessment across the nation. ACT reviewed:

- direct writing assessments used by postsecondary institutions to make admissions and course placement decisions
- state writing content standards for grades 9–12
- literature published over the past thirty years on direct writing assessments and on the teaching of composition at the postsecondary level
- results of the 2002–2003 ACT National Curriculum Survey®

ACT also created an ACT National Writing Test Advisory Panel whose members include some of the foremost national experts on writing instruction, writing assessment, and ESL and developmental writing. Drawing upon our research on writing instruction and assessment, and using the panelists' expertise and experience, ACT drafted a list of descriptors of what students should be able to do to succeed in first-year college writing courses. From this list, ACT and the Advisory Panel developed detailed specifications for the Writing Test such as the type of writing to be elicited, the writing prompt format, and the scoring criteria to be used in the rubric. Extensive field-testing with student papers contributed to further

refinement of prompt specifications and clarification of score point descriptors for the rubric.

Specific writing prompts administered during testing are developed with the assistance of external prompt writers who are recruited on the basis of their expertise and to reflect the diversity of the populations served by the ACT. ACT prompt writers are male and female educators from both high schools and colleges, and they represent a variety of geographical regions, racial and ethnic backgrounds, and educational philosophies.

All potential writing prompts are reviewed for accessibility of concepts and language, appropriateness, and fairness by content experts and teachers at postsecondary institutions and high schools, and by persons sensitive to issues of test fairness. Prompts found to be accessible, proper in form, and fair to all examinees are field-tested on a population equivalent to the ACT examinee population. After field-testing, statistical indices are compiled on the difficulty and other technical characteristics of each prompt. Only prompts that perform acceptably in field-testing become eligible for use in test administrations.

Features of the Writing Test

Scoring Rubric

The Six-Point Holistic Rubric for the Writing Test was developed around five scoring criteria. Essays are evaluated on the evidence they demonstrate of student ability to:

1. Make and articulate judgments by:
   - Taking a position on the issue.
   - Demonstrating the ability to grasp the complexity of the issue by considering implications or complications.
2. Develop a position by:
   - Presenting support or evidence using specific details.
   - Using logical reasoning that shows the writer's ability to distinguish between assertions and evidence and to make inferences based on support and evidence.
3. Sustain a position by focusing on the topic throughout the writing.
4. Organize and present ideas in a logical way by:
   - Logically grouping and sequencing ideas.
   - Using transitional devices to identify logical connections and tie ideas together.
5. Communicate clearly by:
   - Using language effectively.
   - Observing the conventions of standard written English.

Essays are scored holistically—that is, on the basis of the overall impression created by all the elements of the writing.

Prompt Format

The Writing Test consists of one writing prompt that briefly states an issue and describes two points of view on that issue. Students are asked to write in response to a question about their position on the issue described in the writing prompt. In doing so, students may adopt one or the other of the perspectives described in the prompt, or they may present a different point of view on the issue. Students' essay scores are not affected by the point of view they take on the issue. Prompts are designed to be appropriate for response in a 30-minute timed test and to reflect students' interests and experiences.

Scoring the Writing Test

Each operational essay written for the Writing Test is scored by two trained readers, each of whom give it a rating from 1 (low) to 6 (high). The sum of those ratings is a student's Writing Test subscore (2–12). Writing Test readers are trained by reading examples of papers at each score point and by scoring many practice papers. They are given detailed feedback on the accuracy and consistency of their scores during practice. After training, all readers are required to pass a qualifying test rating selected essays. In addition, throughout scoring, readers must continue to perform satisfactorily on compulsory tests measuring the accuracy of their scores. During scoring, a difference of more than one point on any essay is evaluated by a third trained reader to resolve the discrepancy. This method is designed to be as objective and impartial as possible and to ensure all examinees' papers are read and scored using the same application of the scoring rubric.

Score Reporting

Two scores are reported for students who take both the English and Writing Tests in the same administration: a Combined English/Writing score on a scale of 1–36 and a Writing Test subscore on a scale of 2–12. The English Test contributes two-thirds and the Writing Test contributes one-third toward the Combined English/Writing score. The Combined English/Writing score and the Writing Test subscore are reported **in addition to** the scores and subscores on the ACT multiple-choice tests taken in the same administration and the Composite score for those tests. A student's scores on the Writing Test have no effect on his or her score on any other ACT test. Similarly, if a student chooses not to take the Writing Test, the absence of Writing Test scores has no effect on her or his score on any other ACT test.

In addition to reporting numerical scores, the score report includes comments about the essay for students who take both the English and Writing Tests. One reader of each essay assigns comments appropriate for the writing skills demonstrated in the essay. The number of comments for each essay range between one and four, and may include positive and/or constructive comments about the student's writing. This specific, individual feedback on each student essay is designed to help students learn to better assess their own writing skills and to recognize strengths in their writing as well as areas upon which to focus for improvement. Comments are assigned to an essay after it has been scored. The full text of the readers' comments are included on the Student Report, and the comment codes are included on the High School and College Reports. The full text of all readers' comments also is available on ACT's website at **www.act.org/aap/writing/sample/comments.html**.

ACT Plus Writing Essay Comments

Essay Comments, derived from the Scoring Rubric, are selected by ACT readers to help student writers understand the strengths and weaknesses of their essays.

The Comments appear in their entirety on the Student Report. The code numbers for the selected Comments are listed on the High School and College Reports. Complete text for each Comment Code appears below.

No Writing Results

01. The pages submitted for the Writing Test could not be scored. No score is possible if the pages were left blank or were marked void at the test center, or if the essay is illegible, is not written in English, or does not respond to the prompt. In any of these cases, no Combined English/Writing score or Writing subscore can be reported.
02. A Combined English/Writing score and Writing subscore can be reported only when there is a valid English score. Because there were no responses to any items on the multiple-choice English Test, no Combined English/Writing or Writing subscore can be reported.

Make and Articulate Judgments

20. Your essay responded to the prompt by taking a position on the issue.
21. Your essay responded to the prompt by taking a clear position on the issue.
22. Your essay acknowledged counterarguments on the issue but did not discuss them.
23. Your essay showed recognition of the complexity of the issue by addressing counterarguments.
24. Your essay showed recognition of the complexity of the issue by partially evaluating its implications.
25. Your essay addressed the complexity of the issue by fully responding to counterarguments.
26. Your essay addressed the complexity of the issue by evaluating its implications.

Develop Ideas

30. Your essay provided very little writing about your ideas. Try to write more about the topic.
31. The ideas in your essay needed to be more fully explained and supported with more details.
32. Your essay used some specific details, reasons, and examples, but it needed more of them.
33. Your essay adequately supported general statements with specific reasons, examples, and details.
34. General statements in your essay were well supported with specific reasons, examples, and details.
35. Your essay effectively supported general statements with specific reasons, examples, and details.

Sustain Focus

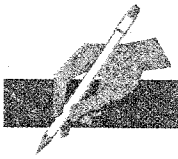
40. Your writing did not maintain a focus on the issue. Try to plan your essay before you write.
41. Your essay focused on the general topic rather than on the specific issue in the prompt.
42. Your essay maintained focus on the specific issue in the prompt.

Organize and Present Ideas

50. Your essay lacked organization. Try to plan and arrange your ideas logically.
51. Your essay was not clearly organized. Try to plan and arrange your ideas logically.
52. Your essay showed basic organizational structure, but the ideas needed to be more clearly connected.
53. The organization of your essay was adequate, but the rigid structure seemed to limit discussion.
54. Your essay was well organized, making it easy to understand logical relationships among ideas.
55. The logical sequence of ideas in your essay fit its persuasive purpose well.

Communicate Clearly

60. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors made your essay difficult to understand.
61. Grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors were distracting. Proofread your writing.
62. Using correct grammar and more varied sentence structures would improve your essay.
63. Using more varied sentence structures would make your essay clearer and more engaging.
64. Using more sentence variety and precise word choice would make your essay clearer and more engaging.
65. Some varied sentence structures and precise word choice added clarity and interest to your writing.
66. Your essay showed a good command of language by using varied sentences and precise word choice.



Scoring Explanation* (Score = 1)

This essay shows little skill in responding to the writing task. While the writer takes a position on the issue in the beginning of the essay *(I think that school should be extended for five year because it will help you how you are educate)*, the rest of the discussion does not convey reasons to support that position. Instead, the writer minimally develops many different ideas about school in general, repeating ideas rather than explaining them *(School is a place where you could learn a lot of different that you don't know. I know that I learn a lot of thing I didn't know but I know them)*. At times, statements supporting claims are not understandable *(By going to school is a good thing because if you go to school it could help have experience in everything that you are doing. To have experience you to do that thing you do best and how well you do at it)*. There is no discernable organization to the essay other than a minimal introductory statement: ideas are not logically grouped, no transitions are used, and no conclusion is offered. Sentence structure and word choice are consistently simple, with sentences repeatedly beginning with "I think" or "I know." Language usage errors are frequently distracting and contribute to difficulty understanding some portions of the essay.

**Please note: the comments reported to students on the Student Score Report are brief comments on the strengths and weaknesses of their writing. The explanations included here for the example papers are more detailed and are similar to those used in training readers to score the ACT Writing Test.*

Score Point 2

I believe high school is a great time for students to decide what they want for there future. Some need more time than others so I believe one more year of high school added is a good idea for some students. One more year of school will take stress off of many students because they won't have to cram packed schedules. This extra year will also give students more time to participate in sports, fine arts, or any type of clubs they're interested in.

I also believe that one more year of high school is unecessary for some if they have already been accepted to colleges and know what they want to do with their future. I think if one more year of school is offered it should depend on your grades and what all you have done with the past four years that decides if you have to go another year. I believe you shouldn't have to if you have made A's and B's all four years, because you are ready to go on. This is just my view on things, I hope I have been of some assistance to your decision.

Scoring Explanation (Score = 2)

This essay demonstrates a weak response to the task. The writer takes a position on the issue with a qualification, thus showing a little recognition of multiple positions *(Some need more time than others so I believe one more year of high school added is a good idea for some students. . . . I also believe that one more year of high school is unecessary for some if they have already been accepted to colleges and know what they want to do with their future)*. The essay is thinly developed, with very little explanation to support each position *(One more year of school will take stress off of many students because they won't have to cram packed schedules. This extra year will also give students more time to participate in sports, fine arts, or any type of*